

# JOURNAL OF ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGY

SUPPLEMENTARY SERIES NUMBER 14

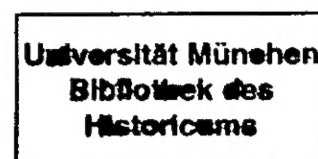
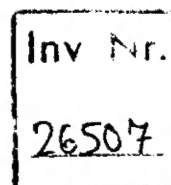
GENERAL EDITOR: J. H. HUMPHREY

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

## THE ROMAN AND BYZANTINE NEAR EAST: SOME RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

ANN ARBOR, MI  
1995

NH 7980 H 926



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Printed by Cushing-Malloy Inc., 1350 N. Main, Ann Arbor, Michigan.  
This journal is printed on acid-free paper and the signatures are sewn.

This book was prepared in connection with a Research Seminar on Late Antiquity held at the Institute for Advanced Study of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, in 1993.

This book has been published with the assistance of a major subvention from Mr. Abraham Feinberg.

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### 7. Fragment of garland sarcophagus (figs. 19-20)

Found in 1993 on the surface, about 3 m above sea level. Traces of plaster suggest that it had been reused in a wall, possibly of Fatimid date.

Greyish marble, probably Proconnesian. H 0.47 m; L 0.725 m; Th. 0.18-0.20 m.

The fragment comes from the right upper corner of a Proconnesian sarcophagus that was evidently left in its quarry state. The left side of the protruding surface, prepared for a Victory or an Eros, has been removed and the surface smoothed out, probably when the fragment was reused in a wall.

#### Discussion

Several garland sarcophagi have been found at the site.<sup>46</sup> Three of them are intact, the others fragmentary. Of the complete pieces at Caesarea only one is fully carved; the other two were left in their quarry state. Three other examples of unfinished garland sarcophagi with rounded bosses have been found at Caesarea,<sup>47</sup> and there is a large group of sarcophagi of the same type from the general region.<sup>48</sup>

Though it seems likely that our nos. 6-7 should be classified with unfinished garland sarcophagi, it remains possible that originally the other three sides were fully carved. For example, the sarcophagus in the Metropolitan Museum<sup>49</sup> has 3 panels decorated with gorgon heads, Victories, and Erotes holding garlands, but the back, with three bosses, was left in its quarry state. Our pieces could therefore come from similar sarcophagi, and they could even belong to the same sarcophagus, although that could only be determined by isotopic analysis.

Department of Art History, Tel-Aviv University

#### Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Professors Raban, Holum and Patrich for permission to publish these pieces and for their assistance. I am grateful to them and to Yael Arnon for help in interpreting the archaeological context of the finds. The photographs were taken by Zaraza Friedman.

<sup>46</sup> R. Gersht and Z. Pearl, "Decoration and marble sources of sarcophagi from Caesarea," *Caesarea Papers* (JRA Suppl. 5, 1992) 222 ff., nos. 1-7.

<sup>47</sup> Gersht and Pearl (supra n.46) nos. 1-2, 7.

<sup>48</sup> See for example J. B. Ward-Perkins, "The imported sarcophagi of Roman Tyre," *BMBey* 22 (1969) 116 f.; N. Asgari, "Die halbfabrikate kleinasiatischer Girlandensarkophage und ihre Herkunft," *AA* 92 (1977) 329-80; Koch and Sichtermann (supra n.45) 484 f.; M. H. Chéhab, "Fouilles de Tyr, la nécropole II, description des fouilles," *BMBey* 34 (1984) 21-22 no.150 pl.v; p.43 no.133-34 pl.ix; p. 174 no.771-72 pl.xxxviii; p.328 no.943-44 pl. lxxvii; p.469 no.3064-65 pl. lxxxiv.

<sup>49</sup> McCann (supra n.45) 30-33.

## The Basilica of Ascalon: marble, imperial art and architecture in Roman Palestine

Moshe Fischer

with contributions by Antje Krug and Ze'ev Pearl

This paper intends to reconstruct the basilica of the late 2nd and early 3rd c. in the elite center of Ascalon and place it in the context of Roman imperial art in Palestine. Although unscribed in the early 1920s and one of the relatively few known monumental buildings of Roman Palestine (at least until the Scythopolis-Beth She'an excavations began), it has not been the subject of any detailed study. It is important because of the quantity of marble pieces that may be attributed to it.<sup>1</sup>

### Ascalon: the historical background

Ascalon was one of the most important towns on the southern Mediterranean coast of Palestine (fig. 1). It was a harbor and an important point on roads, particularly the Via Maris linking Egypt and Syria with Syria and Asia. Ascalon was strongly influenced by Greek culture, like other sites along the coast,<sup>2</sup> although Phoenician culture still is present even in later centuries.<sup>3</sup> Strong Hellenization took place during the Hellenistic period. At the end of the 3rd century it was still a rather small town. Strabo calls it a small and unimportant city.<sup>4</sup> In the 1st c. B.C. it was a Roman colony. In the 1st c. A.D. it was a Roman colony. In the 2nd c. A.D. it was a Roman colony. In the 3rd c. A.D. it was a Roman colony. According to Josephus the town was burnt down during the First Jewish War.<sup>5</sup> This has not been confirmed by archaeological evidence. The town struck its own coins in 70, 130, 135 and until the 3rd c. Those from the 70s were countermarked with symbols of Legio X Fretensis.

Hadrian came to Palestine in 129 and visited Gaza; it is quite likely that he also visited Ascalon, which struck a coin in his honour. Septimius Severus visited Palestine on two occasions, although evidence for a visit to Ascalon is weak.<sup>6</sup> Caracalla visited the town, and the Antonine Itinerary provides evidence for its place in the road-system.<sup>7</sup> The peak of the city's prosperity fell within this period of the 2nd and early 3rd c., as is true for many parts of the province. Our knowledge of the plan and character of the city in this period is assisted by some later sources. Theophanes, an Egyptian clerk, journeyed in Palestine from 317 to 323, just before the great changes which probably occurred in the town after Constantine. He reported spending 600 drachmai visiting the temple, the 'golden basilica', the theater, and the odeum (papyrus 627, ll. 213-20).<sup>8</sup> Of the buildings mentioned only the basilica is known today. The

<sup>1</sup> Otherwise Caesarea and Scythopolis are the cities with the best evidence for the intensive employment of marble; cf. M. L. Fischer, *Das karinthische Kapitell im Alten Israel in der hellenistischen und römischen Periode* (Mainz 1990), with maps of the distribution of marble capitals; and Fischer, *Marble studies* (forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> J. Elayi, "Pénétration grecque en Phénicie sous l'empire perse," *Tourism et monuments, études anciennes* 2 (Nancy 1988).

<sup>3</sup> J. H. Iliffe, "A hoard of bronzes from Ascalon (c. 4 century B.C.)," *QDAP* 5 (1935) 61-68.

<sup>4</sup> Jos., BJ 1.422-25 and AntJ 15. 328-30. We will consider below if this is the same basilica as that treated in this article.

<sup>5</sup> Jos., BJ 2.460.

<sup>6</sup> J. Hasebroek, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers Septimius Severus* (Heidelberg 1923).

<sup>7</sup> *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti* (G. Parthey and M. Pinder, edd.) (Berlin 1848) 151.1; 199.11; 200.3.

<sup>8</sup> C. H. Roberts, E. G. Turner, *Catalogue of the Greek and Latin papyri in the John Rylands Library* 4 (Manchester 1952) nos. 627-28, 630, 638; cf. Y. Hirschfeld, "A busy commercial town in the Roman-Byzantine period," in D. Appel (ed.), *Ashqelon - 4000 years of history* (Tel Aviv) 1, 138-65 (Hebrew).

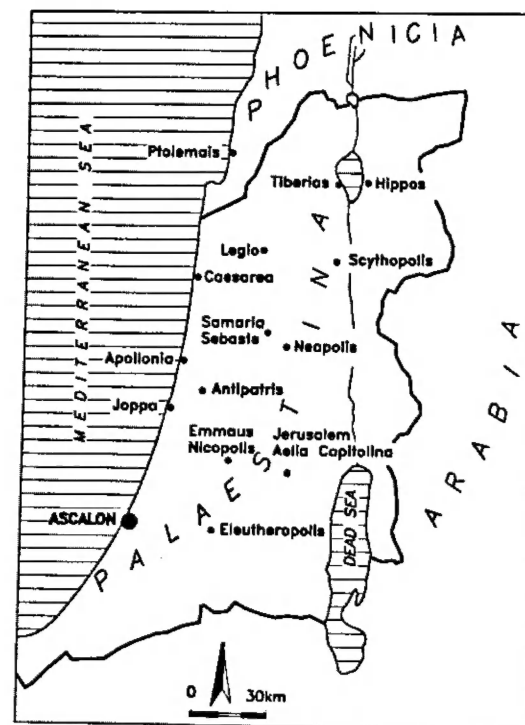


Fig.1. Map of Roman Palestine.

#### Brief history of archaeological investigations<sup>11</sup>

In 1815 Lady Lucy Stanhope excavated in the area of the civic center. Besides a cuirassed statue of a Severan emperor,<sup>12</sup> fragments of sculpture and pottery were found. Then the site became the target of destructive activities including looting.<sup>13</sup> The first systematic excavations were conducted by the Palestine Exploration Fund in two particular areas, the Tell and the Roman civic center (see below).<sup>14</sup> Subsequently some tombs, including the "painted tomb", were excavated,<sup>15</sup> and churches.<sup>16</sup> Since 1985 intensive excavations have been carried out by an American project under L. Stager, mainly at the old Tel in the NW part of the site and at the central mound near the ancient harbor.<sup>17</sup> As well as earlier remains these excavations have revealed a late-Roman bath-house. Rescue excavations conducted by the Israel Antiquities

Madaba map of the 6th c. provides a view of the town at that date, with large colonnades and the huge basilica surviving from the Roman city. Roman Ascalon followed roughly the line of the Crusader Walls, with an oval plan (fig.2).<sup>9</sup> From north to south it measured c.1100 m, from east to west c.600 m. Its area covered c.520 dunam (130 acres), which makes it a city of average size, half the size of Scythopolis but double that of Eleutheropolis.<sup>10</sup> No traces of streets or other major Roman buildings apart from the basilica are known. Most of the population was pagan (there is evidence for the cults of Astarte/Aphrodite, the Semitic Derceto, the Phoenician war-god Phanebal, and Nemesis) but there was also a Jewish minority. Later some churches are known in and around the city. Its harbor saw regular use during the period of Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

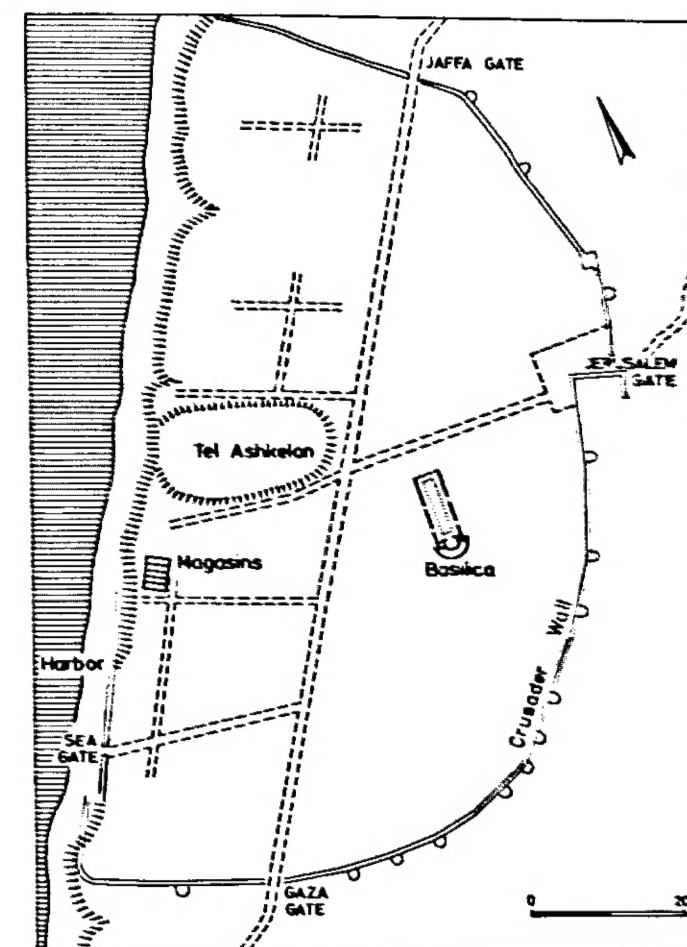


Fig.2. Plan of Ascalon (adapted from Hirschfeld [supra n.8] fig. on p.158).

Authority on the NE side of the city have revealed an important industrial zone of the Byzantine period with wine-presses and pottery kilns that produced Ascalon or Gaza amphoras for the famous Ascalon/Gaza wine.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately the recent excavations have not added any details concerning the urban development of the Roman city center.

As mentioned, the British excavations of 1920-21 under J. Garstang brought to light the remains of a large civic center, consisting of an elongated basilica (110 x 37 m), called a 'peristyle' by the excavator, a semicircular apsidal structure, which we may identify with the *curia*, and shrines.<sup>19</sup> During the excavations some granite columns and fragments of heart-shaped pillars of conglomerate were found, as well as marble pedestal-bases, Corinthian capitals, and fragments of sculptures.

Among items lying on the site or deposited in the Afridar Archaeological collection the following may be attributed to the basilica on the basis of Garstang's notes and their typological features:

#### Architectural pieces attributable to the basilica

1. Two pedestals with Attic-Ionic bases (fig.3).<sup>20</sup> Monolithic, square shape. Marble, one left unfinished. h 80 cm; h of base 45 cm; pedestal 110 cm square; d of base 100 cm. Two profiled bands on upper and lower end, with flat dado between. Typical Roman Attic-Ionic base with 2 tori divided by 1 scotia. They belonged to the 2 rows of columns dividing the basilica into 3 naves.
2. Heart-shaped pedestal with base (fig.4).<sup>21</sup> Marble. Outer sides of pedestal 150 cm. Same shape and size as the pedestal base above.
3. Heart-shaped columns (fig.5a-b). Conglomerate. Outer square 80 x 80 cm with 2 protruding half-columns of d 40 cm.
4. Columns, monolithic. Grey granite and conglomerate.
5. Base and pedestal of engaged corner column (fig.6a-c). h 30 cm; l 79 cm; w 35 cm; d of protruding base 27 cm. It may derive from the second storey.

<sup>18</sup> *Archaeological Newsletter* 100 (1993) 86-91 (Hebrew); cf. also P. Mayerson, "The Gaza 'wine' jar (gazition) and the 'lost' Ashkelon jar (askalonion)," *IEJ* 42 (1992) 76-80.

<sup>19</sup> See chiefly *PEFQSt* 1924, 24-35 with plates I-II.

<sup>20</sup> Garstang 1924, fig.1.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> D. Pringle, "King Richard I and the walls of Ascalon," *PEQ* 116 (1984) 133-47, and see the attempt at a plan of the Roman city in Hirschfeld (supra n.8) 158.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. M. Broshi, "The population of western Palestine in the Roman-Byzantine period," *BASOR* 236 (1979) 1-10.

<sup>11</sup> For a detailed note on the history of excavations see R. Wenning, "Eine Darstellung des Caracalla in Aschkelon?" in *Mousikos Aner: Festschrift M. Wegner* (Bonn 1992) 499-510. See also Avi-Yonah in the *Encyclopedia of archaeological excavations in the Holy Land* (1975) 121-30.

<sup>12</sup> C. L. Meryon, *Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope III* (London, repr. 1983) 161; D. K. Hill, "A Roman emperor in armor," *Bulletin Walters Art Gallery* 14.2 (November 1961) 1-2, fig.; C. C. Vermeule, "Hellenistic and Roman cuirassed statues, a supplement," *Berytus* 15, 1964, 95-110.

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., H. Thiersch, "Berichte 2. Archäologischer Jahresbericht," *ZDPV* 37 (1914) 72: "stets ist der Platz ein ergiebiger Fundort fuer Statuen, Reliefs."

<sup>14</sup> For preliminary reports see J. Garstang in *PEFQSt* 1921, 12-16, 73-75, 76-90, 162-69; 1922, 22-23, 112-19; 1924, 24-35.

<sup>15</sup> J. Ory, "A painted tomb near Ascalon," *QDAP* 8 (1939) 41-42.

<sup>16</sup> Avi-Yonah in *Encyclopedia* (supra n.11) s.v. Ascalon.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. L. E. Stager, *Ashkelon discovered. From Canaanites and Philistines to Romans and Moslems* (BAR special number 1991, reprinting BAR March-April 1991, 25-43; May-June 1991, 27-42 and July-August 1991, 35-53, 72-73).



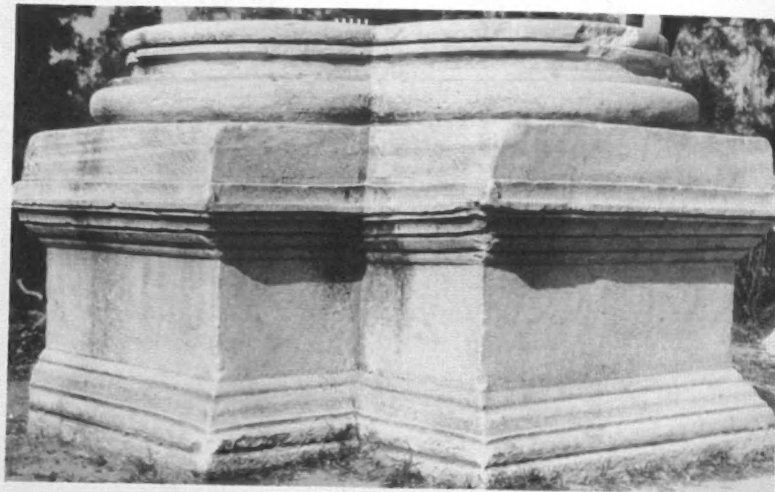


Fig. 3. Pedestal with base and capital of main order. Fig. 4. Heart-shaped pedestal with base of main order.



Fig. 5. Fragment of heart-shaped column of the main order, front and back.

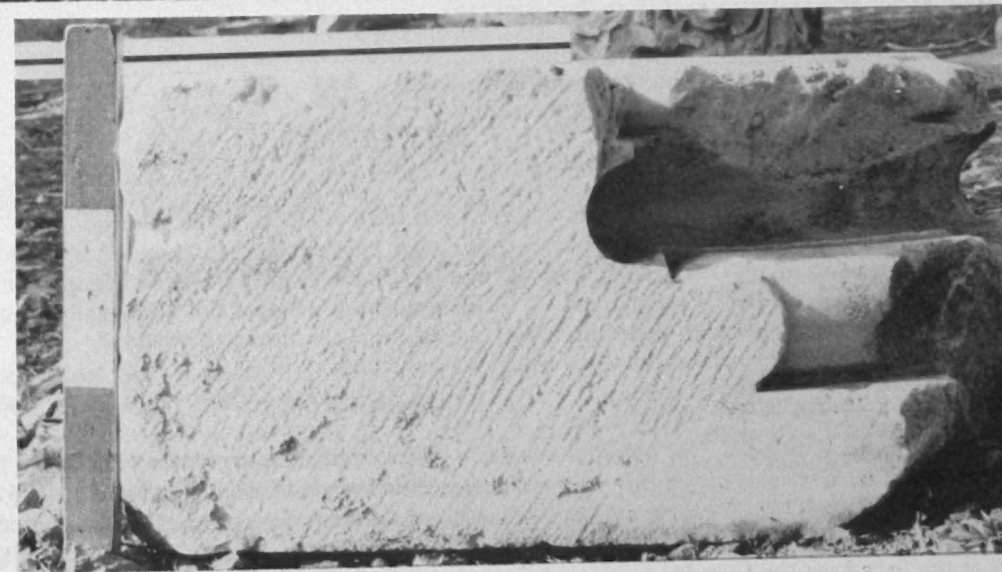
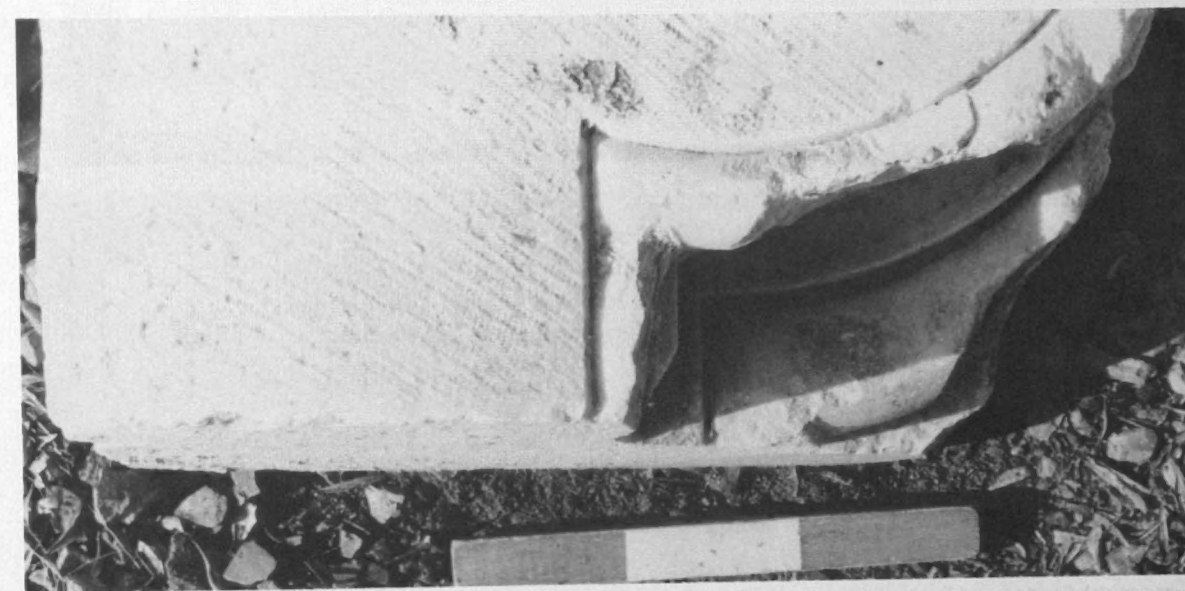
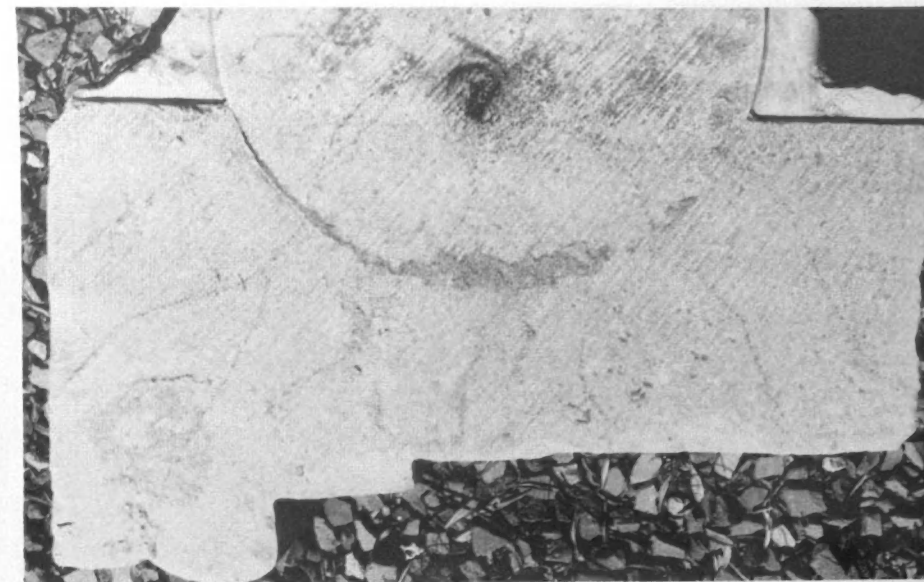


Fig. 6a-c. Attic-Ionic base of engaged corner column of the second storey, seen from above, front, and side.





Fig. 7. Protruding architrave-frieze of the lateral aisles.

6. Fragment of architrave-frieze (fig. 7).

l of the decorated part 40 cm; l of the part joined with the wall 26 cm; h 55 cm; w 30 cm. The ovolo is of the usual type with wide eggshell; the darts are sharply differentiated. This fragment protruded from the wall of the lateral naves, as in a *scaenae frons*.

7. Fragment of architrave-frieze.

l 75 cm; h 52 cm (architrave 32 cm, frieze 20 cm).

Astragal with elongated beads, twisted rope typical of 2nd-3rd c. decoration. Ovolo damaged but evidently with wide eggshell and flat darts. Floral acanthus frieze. On left side 2 upright acanthus leaves are visible; a scroll develops to the right with a flower in the center.

In Asia Minor this type was common from the Trajanic/Hadrianic period onwards, and it appears at Severan Lepcis Magna.<sup>22</sup>

8. Fragment of fascies of architrave, same type but damaged.

9. Fragment of protruding architrave, frontal part preserved, decorated on 3 sides. It could have formed the front side of the pieces just described.

10. Fragment of architrave.

11. Fragment of architrave.

12. Fragment of small tympanum with acanthus modillions and sima of curled palmettes (fig. 8).

At the top the central modillion is preserved, covered by a curled palmette and surrounded by a frame of smaller ovolos; in the adjacent coffers only a few remains of leaves are visible. The sima began over a flat corona, from which it was divided by an astragal. It is difficult to tell whether the type exhibited curled and closed palmettes or palmettes with acanthus leaves (as commonly in Roman Palestine). Possibly it decorated one of the niches in the walls where statues stood.

<sup>22</sup> For Asia Minor see V. Strocka, *Das Markttor von Milet* (Winckelmannsprogramm 128, Berlin 1981) fig. 57 and S. Pulz, *Untersuchungen zur kaiserzeitlichen Bauornamentik von Didyma* (IstMitt. Beih. 35, Tübingen 1989) pls. 26-27; for a rather similar example from Severan Lepcis Magna see M. Floriani Squarciapino, *Sculture del Foro Severiano di Leptis Magna* (Roma 1974) pl. XC; it also occurs at the Facade of the Colossal Figures at Corinth (cf. R. Stillwell, *Corinth I* [Cambridge MA 1941] 69-71, figs. 46-47).



Fig. 8. Tympanon.

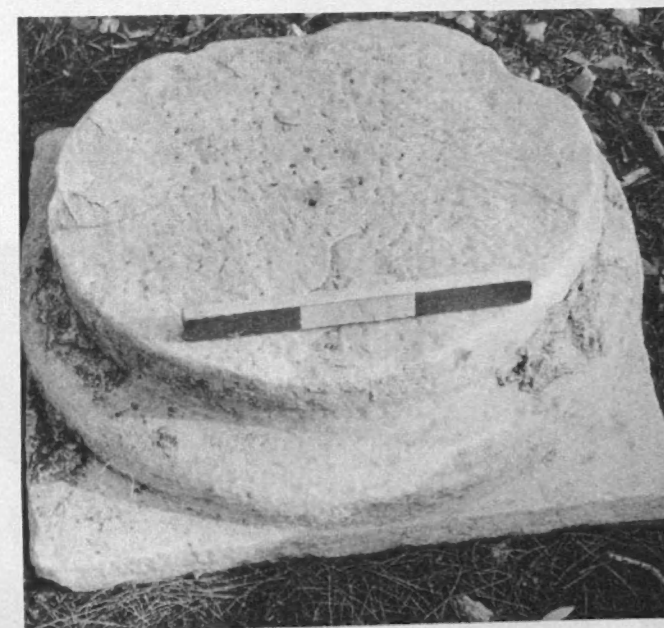


Fig. 9. Attic-Ionic base, probably from the second storey.

13. Attic-Ionic base (fig. 9)  
d c. 50 cm.

The items 5-13 seem to have derived from the upper storey, as is evident from their dimensions.

#### Architectural pieces less certainly attributable to the basilica

Those that follow are less certainly attributable to the Basilica, although the ceiling cassettes (no. 16) are good candidates, since they are mentioned by Thiersch (supra n. 13).

14. Relief of a frieze or a lintel.<sup>23</sup>

Oval medallions are created by vine scrolls, leaves and grapes; they are alternately horizontal and vertical.

In the horizontal medallion a seated individual is shown; in the vertical one Pan is shown.

This piece recalls the decoration on a reused lintel of local stone found at Eleutheropolis (Beth Guvrin).<sup>24</sup>

15. Frieze. Lost. See Hanauer.<sup>25</sup>  
Acanthus scroll with hunting putti and an animal (lion?).

<sup>23</sup> IAA no. 31.233; J. H. Iliffe, "A bust of a Pan," *QDAP* 3 (1934) 165-66, pl. LXVII.3.

<sup>24</sup> Y. Dagan, M. Fischer and Y. Tsafrir, "An inscribed lintel from Beth Guvrin," *IEJ* 35 (1985) 28-34.

<sup>25</sup> J. H. Hanauer, "Two busts from Caesarea," *PEFQSt* 1898, 159-60.





Fig. 10. Large capital of main order (see also fig. 3). Fig. 11. Large figured corner capital of heart-shaped column of the main order.



Fig. 12. Small capital probably from the second storey. Fig. 13. Small capital probably from the second storey or the upper gallery.

16. Ceiling coffers. Lost (?). Thiersch (supra n.13) pl. XI, 1-3.

A draped woman, a lion, and Hermes are shown.

These ceiling coffers may have formed part of the wall and ceiling decoration mentioned by Garstang, *PEFQSt* 1921, 15.

#### CORINTHIAN CAPITALS

A total of 25 Corinthian capitals have been found. They may be attributed to two main types, IIIDc and VAa and VEa, by my typology (supra n.1).

The largest capitals belong to types VAa and VEa (fig. 10).<sup>26</sup>

h 80-91 cm (largest 98 cm); lower d c. 60-63 cm. Differences in size are mainly due to their state of preservation. Their original height was from 90 to 95 cm.

They may be associated with the ground floor of the basilica. Some were figured capitals with eagles<sup>27</sup> and Medusas.

They are similar in size, shape and design to capitals from the basilica at Lepcis Magna<sup>28</sup> and from the Lepcis Quadrifrons<sup>29</sup> that are adorned with eagles.<sup>30</sup> At Sabratha too our type VE is quite common<sup>31</sup> and the marble is thought to have been imported from Proconnesos by itinerant *marmorarii*.<sup>32</sup> Our type VE is also found in the theater at Alexandria.<sup>33</sup> A group of similar capitals comes from Herakleia Pontica on the Black Sea.<sup>34</sup>

One of the capitals from Ascalon is of particular interest (fig. 11). It seems to have decorated one of the heart-shaped corner pillars.<sup>35</sup> The part preserved perhaps belonged to the exterior decoration, since it is not curved. This capital is decorated with an eagle, like one at Lepcis Magna.<sup>36</sup>

The smaller capitals (fig. 12) belong to type IIIDc.

av. h 60 cm; lower d c. 40 cm.

They typify the trend developed by artists from Aphrodisias in the mid 2nd c. This is the most popular type of marble capital in Roman Palestine. Eleven examples from Caesarea were analysed and all found to come from the same outcrop in the Marmara quarry.<sup>37</sup>

Some other capitals belong to types IIIDb and IVBb (fig. 13). Their size is similar to the preceding group. Perhaps they were used in the upper storey of the basilica or in an adjacent building.

Overall the capitals show clear links with examples from North Africa and Asia Minor in the second half of the 2nd and early 3rd centuries. The marble workshops of Asia Minor seem to have been providing marble elements for both North Africa and the Near East, although we cannot exclude the possibility that somewhere in the SE part of the Mediterranean there was a regional or branch workshop.

<sup>26</sup> One of them is illustrated in Garstang, *PEFQSt* 1924, fig. 2, cf. pl. III.

<sup>27</sup> M. L. Fischer, "Figured capitals in Roman Palestine. Marble imports and local stones: some aspects of "imperial" and "provincial" art," *AA* 1991, 119-44.

<sup>28</sup> R. Bartoccini, *AfrIt* 1 (1927) 66 fig. 12.

<sup>29</sup> R. Bartoccini, *AfrIt* 4 (1931) 52 fig. 20; cf. also E. von Mercklin, *Antike Figuralkapitelle* (Berlin 1963) nos. 561-65.

<sup>30</sup> von Mercklin 231 no. 564, figs. 1066-73.

<sup>31</sup> F. Tomasello, *QuadArchLib* 13 (1983) 89 fig. 3, compared with an example from Side (p. 96, n. 24, figs. 4-5).

<sup>32</sup> Tomasello (supra n. 31) 97 n. 27.

<sup>33</sup> K. Michalowski, *Alexandria* (Warsaw 1970) pl. 69.

<sup>34</sup> W. Hoepfner, *Herakleia Pontike* (Wien 1966) 87-88 fig. 24. He stresses the connection between the design at Herakleia and the Severan buildings of Lepcis and Sabratha.

<sup>35</sup> This suggestion was made by A. Hoffmann, to whom I am most grateful for his invaluable help and advice throughout.

<sup>36</sup> von Mercklin (supra n. 29) fig. 1067.

<sup>37</sup> M. L. Fischer, M. Magaritz and Z. Pearl, "Isotopic and artistic analysis of Corinthian capitals from Caesarea Maritima," *Caesarea Papers* (JRA Suppl. 5, 1992) 219-20.



## FIGURED PILASTERS

Four figured pilasters have attracted attention from various scholars,<sup>38</sup> and they warrant further discussion here.

A Pilaster, the best preserved of the four. Figs. 14a-d and 15.  
h 3.60 m, breadth 0.90 m, d (width) 0.70 m.

A hole and channel are visible on its upper rectangular surface (fig. 14c), probably evidence of how lead was introduced in order to tie the block to a piece above. The back is roughly smoothed. The lateral sides (fig. 14b) are divided into 3 strips. The strip close to the front (27 cm wide) is finely smoothed except for the lowest 60 cm where the surface was left slightly pointed. This part matches the height of the projecting pedestal (see below). The middle strip (28 cm wide) is roughly worked with a pointed chisel. The back strip (15 cm wide) is some 2 cm higher than the other two strips and is roughly smoothed like the second strip. The division of the lateral surfaces reflects the manner in which the pilaster was placed in its architectural frame.

The front surface is decorated with a sculpture in high relief (fig. 14a). Above, it is framed by a projecting cornice (18 cm high); below is a pedestal (57 cm high). The sculptures are preserved to a height of c. 2.62 m. They comprise a winged Nike standing barefoot on a globe supported by a kneeling Atlas. The whole group stands on a pedestal which projects 26 cm beyond the rest of the piece and comprises a dado 23 cm high with linear base at the bottom and cornice 56 cm high at the top.

The winged victory is 2.08 m high including the cornice where the remains of a *polos* are visible. Her face is completely mutilated. Her right leg is slightly advanced. With her left hand she lifts up her *peplos*. Her right hand, of which only the upper arm is preserved, probably held a laurel wreath at the level of the cornice. Her *peplos* is tied by a girdle below the breasts. The artist tried to convey the illusion of the *peplos* fluttering as she landed on the globe by carving lines into the marble and by accentuating her anatomy and the plasticity of the *peplos*. Thus the roundness of her abdomen and navel are shown between the folds. The grasping of the *peplos* is an archaistic feature not normally found on representations of Nikai. This motif was evidently added by our artist, since no connection is created between the folds falling alongside the legs and those of the grasped portion of the *peplos*. Drill marks are visible although in places attempts were made to remove them.

The kneeling Atlas bearing the globe (fig. 14d) has strongly emphasized anatomical features. The globe is flattened by his head as if to accentuate the heavy burden. The design recalls that of Atlas Farnese<sup>39</sup> but it has something in common with the Atlas supporting the zodiac in a sculpture in the Villa Albani,<sup>40</sup> or with one on the *pulpitum* of the theater of Dionysos at Athens.<sup>41</sup> It also resembles some kneeling barbarians and telamones.<sup>42</sup>

Victories holding a wreath and landing on a globe are very popular in Roman art, but Victory standing on a globe supported by an Atlas is quite rare.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Such as S. Reinach, *Revue des Etudes Juives* 16 (1888) 24 pl. A and id., *RSGR* II 1, 389, no. 4; *LIMC* V (1990) s.v. Isis, 773, no. 175; P. R. Diplock, "The date of Askalon's sculptured panels and an identification of Caesarea statues," *PEQ* 103 (1971) 13-16 and id., "Further commentaries on 'An identification of the Caesarea statues,'" *PEQ* 103 (1973) 165-66; R. M. Schneider, *Bunte Barbaren* (Worms 1986) 45-46, pl. 21.4; Wenning (supra n. 11).

<sup>39</sup> *LIMC* III 1, s.v. Atlas \*B, nos. 32-45, 47a (the Ascalon Atlas); Schneider (supra n. 38) 47, pl. 20.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *LIMC* III.1, s.v. Atlas no. 37. For an example from Apamea see J. C. Balty, *JRS* 78 (1988) 95 pl. XI 3.

<sup>41</sup> *Dar. Sag.* I 1, s.v. Atlas, fig. 609; for copies of this type see *Museo Nazionale Romano. Le sculture* I.7 (Roma 1984) 361-63, nos. XI 20-22.

<sup>42</sup> Like those from the theater at Caesarea, cf. A. Frova, *Scavi di Caesarea Maritima* (Milano 1965) 205-6, figs. 260-61.

<sup>43</sup> Schneider (supra n. 38) 45-50, treats the Ascalon piece as a model for reconstructing other fragments showing Atlas supporting a globe. For another example from Palestine see an inscribed relief from the High Level Aqueduct at Caesarea (fig. 22) reconstructed by J. Olami and J. Ringel, *IEJ* 25 (1975) 148-50, fig. IV B, pl. 3. In that case a Victory stands on a globe supported by an Atlas and she lifts a medallion crowned by an aedicula with an eagle inside. Not all of these details are now visible on the piece.

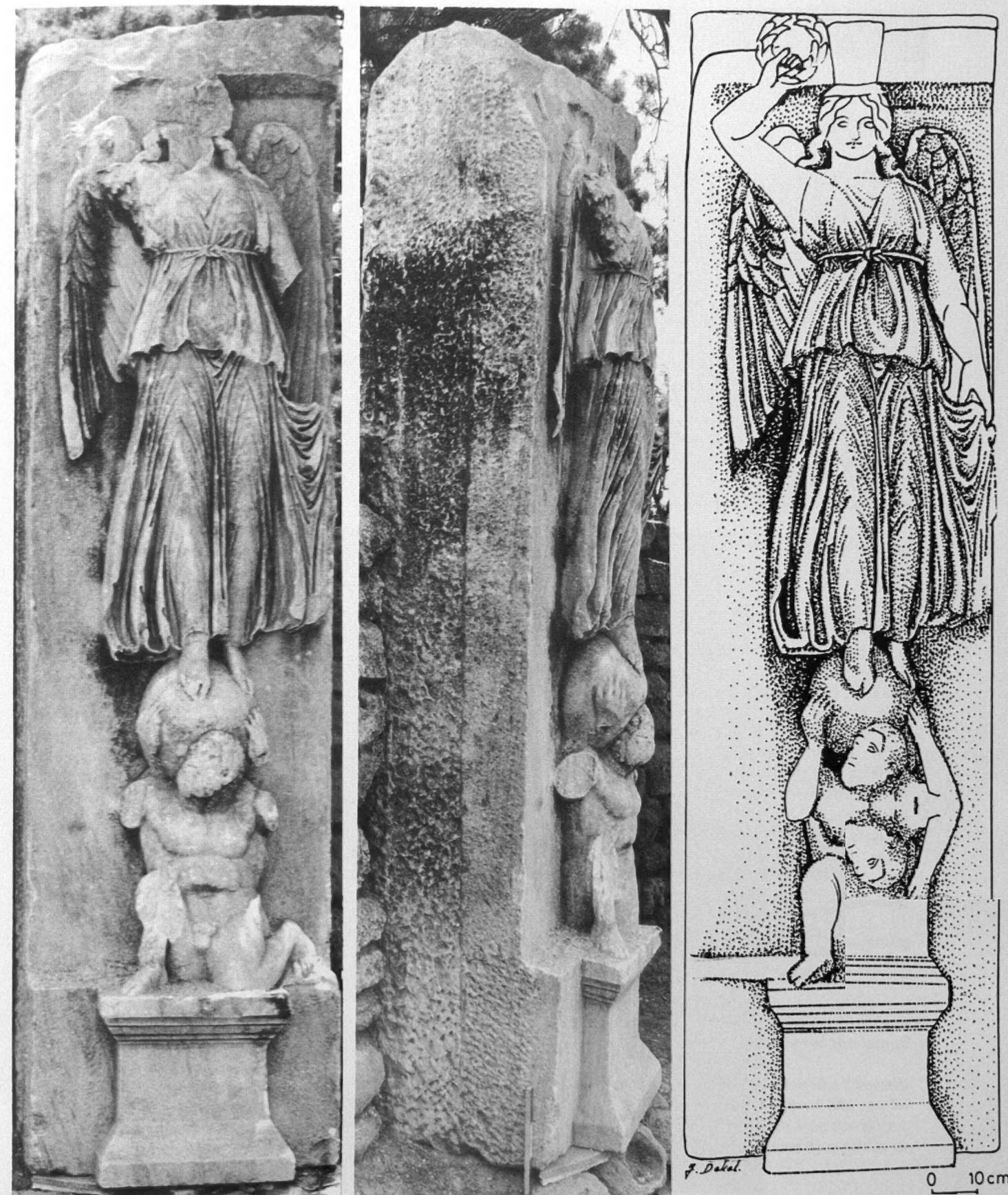


Fig. 14a (left). Figured pilaster A, showing front. Fig. 14b. Same, side. Fig. 15 (right). Drawing.



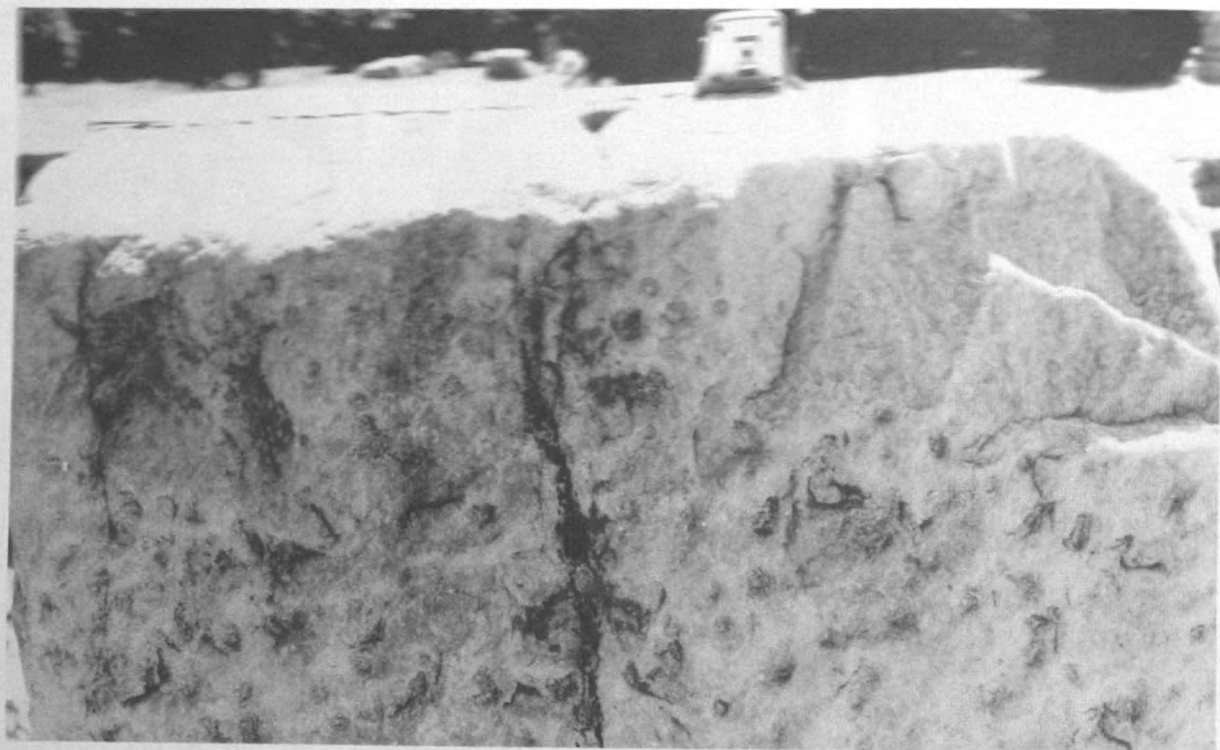


Fig. 14b (above). Figured pilaster A, upper part of side. Fig. 14c (below). Detail of Atlas.

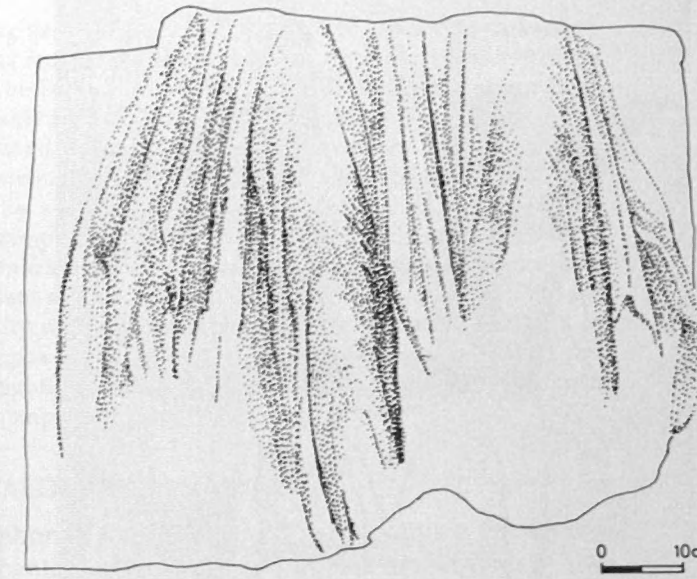
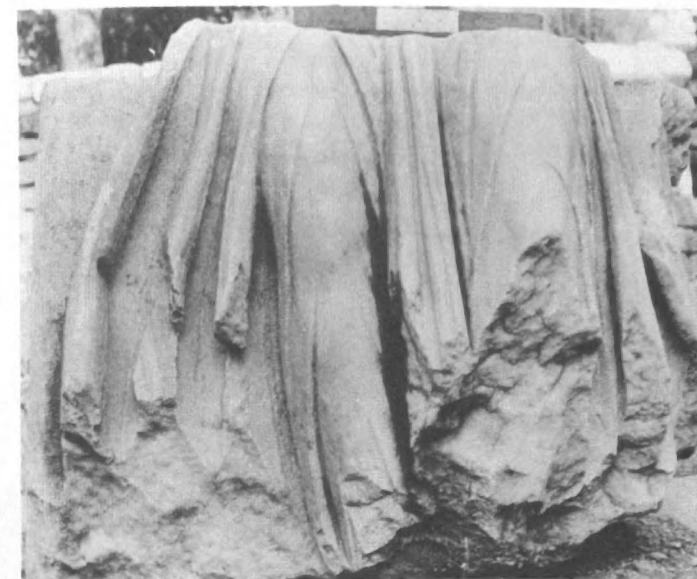


Fig. 16 (left). Figured pilaster B.

Fig. 17. Drawing of figured pilaster B.

B. Fragment of a pilaster similar to A above (figs. 16-17).

Only one fragment (h 70 cm) is preserved. It shows the area above and below the knees of a Victory. She seems to be resting her right leg while the left leg is placed slightly forward. This difference from piece A should be significant when considering its original placement. Again, Victory probably lifted her *peplos* with her left hand.

C. Pilaster of the same kind as piece A but only a little more than half is preserved (figs. 18-19). Its shape, cornice and treatment of the lateral sides and upper surface conform to those of piece A. h 2.28m; breadth 90 cm; d 60 cm.

The sculptured side represents a winged Victory. Her face is damaged. Two long locks descend from her shoulder towards her breasts. She wears a *polos* which reaches the upper edge of the cornice. In her right hand she holds a palm branch. A small socket to support the hand with the palm branch remains. Her left arm (remains of the forearm) points upwards, suggesting that it held a wreath (some traces at the upper right corner of the cornice may belong to a wreath). Traces of her right leg and the smooth pointed surface behind her left leg, which was probably extended forwards, survive, as well as traces of a round feature, probably a globe.

She is shown at the moment of alighting on the globe. Her *peplos* has a long *kolpos* drawn just below the breasts by a wide girdle tied in the middle. The lateral folds flutter in the breeze and reveal the contour of her body. The folds around the breasts and the abdomen are carved deeply and schematically, differing from the treatment of those on piece A.

Victory standing on a globe and holding a palm branch and wreath belongs to a type frequently copied in Roman art following a type that came to Rome with Augustus after the battle of Actium. The palm symbolized peace, the wreath the crowning of the victor.<sup>44</sup> Our Victory differs from the standard type in having the palm in her right and wreath in her left. Perhaps this was determined by the design of this particular building and its overall decorative program.

D. Belongs to the same type as pieces A-C (figs. 20a-c and 21)

Preserved h 1.07 m (less than one third of the original height). Its width and the working of the lateral sides resemble pieces A-C.

Two figures are carved on the front. The main figure is a frontal woman resembling korai of the Caryatid type. She wears a *polos* and a diadem with central emblem. On her *polos* some attributes of Isis can be discerned: crowns of stars with crescent moon, and ears of wheat. It is not clear if the *polos* was turritiform. She wears a short-sleeved *chiton* and robe ending in tassels which is tied between the breast by a girdle in

<sup>44</sup> T. Hölscher, *Victoria Romana* (Mainz 1967) passim.





Fig.18. Figured pilaster C.



Fig.19. Drawing of figured pilaster C.

an Isiac knot.<sup>45</sup> Her hair is carefully combed, framing her forehead and her oval face. Two long corkscrew curls fall upon her shoulders, as is usual. Her hands are not preserved, but her right hand was probably slightly advanced. She was probably shown as Tyche-Fortuna or as Isis-Tyche. This type is known from other pieces and from inscriptions.<sup>46</sup> If so, she probably held a cornucopia or a rudder. Behind her and to her right is a second figure, a standing boy. He is in three-quarters' pose, with bare right shoulder pushed forwards. He wears the *himation* which he holds with his right hand. Face and hand are those of a child. His locks are framed by a diadem with central emblem of 5-pointed star (somewhat damaged). A few locks descend to the temple without covering his ear. This small figure has almost always been identified as Horus/Harpokrates, the son of Isis, but since he lacks any characteristics of that figure he may instead represent a priest of Sarapis or a worshipper.<sup>47</sup> On this, see the following Excursus by A. Krug. In fact a divinity with a worshipper or priest was quite common in eastern art, particularly at Palmyra and Dura Europos in the 2nd-3rd c. The deities are central and the other figures smaller and to one side, sometimes slightly recessed.<sup>48</sup> The cult of Isis was quite popular in Roman Palestine, and we know that Ascalon was an important place of her worship.<sup>49</sup>

#### EXCURSUS: A PRIEST OF SARAPIS AT ASCALON? by Antje Krug

This excursus will propose a new interpretation of the male figure accompanying Isis on the above-mentioned pilaster. First, a few comments on the depiction of Isis are in order. The representation shows some divergences from the canonical Isis type, the reason for which will be suggested below. The pose is rather like a pillar, with rigidly symmetrical dress and rather tall *polos*. The composition did not leave much room for attributes. Since her hands are missing the attributes which they held are unknown. Most frequently Isis-Tyche held cornucopias in her left and a rudder in her right hand.<sup>50</sup> In this instance her left arm, which hangs down more or less vertically, probably held a *situla*, as there are no traces of a *cornucopia*. Often too Isis held a *sistrum* raised in front or to the side. In this case her right arm is lowered and slightly bent in front of her hip and may have grasped a *sistrum* or a rudder, the blade of which might have rested against her right side.

The small male figure depicted behind and above the right shoulder of Isis is the main focus of this note. He wears a *himation* whose plain folds are draped around his body and over his left shoulder. The surface is rather worn and it is unclear if he is wearing a tunic or chiton beneath. Only his right leg is visible. His left arm disappears behind the shoulder of Isis. His right arm grasps the rim of the garment and perhaps holds a scroll as well. His face is round and chubby, with high forehead and short nose.<sup>51</sup> The head is framed by a fillet with a round emblem at the center. Some short curls emerge on the temples.

<sup>45</sup> On Isis dress see E. J. Walters, *Attic grave reliefs that represent women in the dress of Isis* (Hesperia Suppl. XXII, Princeton NJ 1988), and J. Eingartner, *Isis und ihre Dienerinnen in der Kunst der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Mnemosyne Suppl., Leiden 1991).

<sup>46</sup> For an inscription mentioning Isi-Tyche, see Roscher, *Lexikon Mythologie* I 2 (1886-90) 1543-44; for artistic representations see *DarSag*. III 1 (1900) s.v. Isis (G. Lafaye), 577-79 fig.4095 (attributes); cf. II 2 (1896) s.v. Fortuna, 1273, fig.3242, holding in her left hand a *cornucopia*.

<sup>47</sup> Wenning (supra n.11) queried whether the pair may presented Julia Domna and Caracalla.

<sup>48</sup> For Palmyrene representations of this kind see M. A. R. Colledge, *The art of Palmyra* (London 1976) 68, fig.83; for cult reliefs from Dura Europos see M. Rostovtzeff et al., *The excavations at Dura Europos. Preliminary report of the seventh and eighth seasons...* (New Haven 1939) 292-302, pl. XXXVII.

<sup>49</sup> "Invocation of Isis", *POxy* XI, no.1380, 190, cols. V-VI, ll. 93-99. See also a terracotta bust representing Isis-Tyche from Ascalon (D. Flusser, "Gods, personifications and sea-monsters," *Sefunim* 3 [1969-71] 29, pl. IV.7 [h 14 cm]).

<sup>50</sup> LIMC V (1990) s.v. Isis, 794, pl. 521-22 (Tran Tam Tinh).

<sup>51</sup> A dark line running across the right cheek is a vein in the marble.



This figure was always identified as Horus/Harpokrates (see above, n.47) although Watzinger already noted its portrait-like features.<sup>52</sup> Recently R. Wenning has made a case for the juvenile Caracalla (with Julia Domna in the guise of Isis).<sup>53</sup> He is cautious about attributing the figure to one of the known portrait types of Caracalla because of its worn condition and rather indefinite features. Certainly the figure lacks the traditional attributes of Horus/Harpokrates (the Horus 'lock', the forefinger touching the lips), and he wears contemporary male costume and hair style. There is one additional detail that may assist the figure's identification, the round emblem on the fillet with central knob displaying faint traces of rays. This is best identified as the star-shaped emblem of priests of Sarapis. Goette recently discussed a series of male portraits with head framed by a fillet bearing a star in its center, and argued convincingly that they represent priests of Sarapis, particularly the high-ranking Neokoroi.<sup>54</sup> Most of the examples listed by Goette come from Egypt but there are some others.

The identification with Harpocrates/Horus was made particularly because of the figure's small and childlike proportions, but those are due primarily to the constraints of the composition as a whole. The majestic goddess dominates the center of the composition and little space is left for her attributes, while for a second figure the only spaces available are the triangular niches above her shoulders. The sculptor made the best use of this limited space by placing our small figure slightly behind the goddess' shoulder and by emphasizing his head and diadem while neglecting his feet and lower body. The proportions of the second figure also seem to be the result of a certain clumsiness by the sculptor. It seems that in general for these pilasters the sculptors followed models but that when in places they departed from the models difficulties resulted. Thus the presumed rudder is not given sufficient space while the sistrum is atypically placed in the goddess' right hand which is not in its normal pose. Also, whereas the folds of Isis' garment are deeply cut, those of the male figure are plain and flat, with insufficient contrast of light and shade.

The youth with the priest's fillet, depicted in an important place next to the goddess within the sculptural decoration of the basilica, may be the donor who commissioned some of the work or was connected with the construction or dedication of the structure as a whole. This suggestion is not contradicted by the youthful appearance of the figure, since Goette's list includes another who seems only just to have emerged from childhood.<sup>55</sup> Nor would it be unusual for a donor's portrait to be placed close to his dedication. We find portraits of donors and even of their families in a number of public buildings such as the nymphaeum of Herodes Atticus or the baths of Perge.<sup>56</sup> It is also common for deities and mortals to appear together in the same dedicatory scene. A votive relief from the Capitol hill in Rome shows the donor side by side by Demeter-Isis, Sarapis, Harpocrates and Kore-Tyche, all of them at the same scale.<sup>57</sup> From Dura Europos comes a scene with deities symmetrically flanked by donors and victories of the same size, yet the donor is placed at the very edge, extending slightly beyond the frame. The inscription indicates that the donor came from Palmyra and had embellished the sanctuary with a chapel.<sup>58</sup> One of the main characteristics of Palmyrene funerary reliefs is the differentiation of figures by size according to their relative importance. In some a deceased woman is shown with busts or half-figures of her children; their small scale helps to emphas-

<sup>52</sup> C. Watzinger, *Denkmäler Palästinas II* (Leipzig 1935) 98.

<sup>53</sup> Supra n.11, 506-10.

<sup>54</sup> H. R. Goette, "Kaiserzeitliche Bildnisse von Sarapis-Priestern," *MittKairo* 45 (1989) 173-86.

<sup>55</sup> Goette (supra n.54) pl.15 (Louvre MA 3169).

<sup>56</sup> R. Bol, *Das Statuenprogramm des Herodes-Atticus-Nymphaeums* (Ol.Forsch. 15, Berlin 1984) 84-87, with further examples and references.

<sup>57</sup> Th. Kraus, "Alexandrinische Triaden in der römischen Kaiserzeit," *MittKairo* 11 (1963) 97-105.

<sup>58</sup> Colledge (supra n.48) 227 fig.146.



Fig.20a. Figured pilaster D, frontal view.



Fig.20b. Same, side view.



Fig.21. Drawing of figured pilaster D.



Fig.20c. Same, detail of "child".

ize the woman's role as a mother, and she is invariably shown young and beautiful.<sup>59</sup> The attempt to achieve a balanced composition by giving an equal height to the heads produces Palmyrene banqueting scenes where the main figure, a reclining man fills almost the entire height while the seated lady accompanying him is of the same height, and so at a much smaller scale.<sup>60</sup> On our piece, the human figure could not have been shown full-size, so the sculptor placed him at a reduced scale beside and behind Isis-Tyche after modifying the common prototype of the goddess appropriately. If the human figure was indeed as young as suggested by the portrait, the composition indeed follows closely the example of Palmyrene art, whereas the prototype for the whole scene draws upon Roman imperial art. Finally, if we are correct in arguing for the inclusion here of a local donor, it follows that the piece was carved locally rather than imported from Asia Minor as a finished carving.

The resemblance between this portrait and two early portrait types of Caracalla should be discussed. Caracalla's "1. Thronfolgertypus" is characterized by rather long curls and childlike features, and has been dated c.196-204.<sup>61</sup> The still youthful but more adult "2. Thronfolgertypus" is dated c.208.<sup>62</sup> The short, cap-like curls of our figure are closer to the second Caracallan type, but nothing more precise can be said, as Wenning correctly noted.<sup>63</sup> He



Fig.22. Relief and inscription from High-level aqueduct of Caesarea (Tel Mevorakh).

concluded that the resemblance was more general, even of a retrospective nature. Thus, we should accept the portrait as a private portrait following the model established by the imperial family and connected to the second Caracallan type. That provides a *terminus ante quem non* for the carving of this pilaster, and perhaps of the Basilica as a whole. Finally, if our identification of a priest of Sarapis is correct, it would imply the existence at Ascalon of a Sarapeion<sup>64</sup> and of sculptured representations of Sarapis in the city. Possibly another pilaster of the series depicted Sarapis as its main deity.

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- <sup>59</sup> For Palmyrene representations of this kind see Colledge (supra n.48) 68 fig.83; K. Parlasca, *Syrische Grabreliefs hellenistischer und römischer Zeit. Fundgruppen und Probleme* (Mainz 1981) 15, pl.17.2; K. Tanabe (ed.), *Memoirs of the Ancient Orient Museum I: Sculptures of Palmyra* (Tokyo 1986) nos. 335-36; for cult reliefs see P. Collart and J. Vicari, *Le sanctuaire de Baalshamin à Palmyre* (Rome 1969) 222, pl. CVIII.1; H. Ingholt, *Studier over Palmyrensk Skulptur* (Kobenhavn 1928) 75-77, PS 46, pl. XIV.2, A.D. 184; for Dura-Europos cult reliefs see Rostovtzeff (supra n.48) 292-302, pl. XXXVII, and A. Perkins, *The art of Dura-Europos* (Oxford 1973).
- <sup>60</sup> Colledge (supra n.48) figs. 61-62.
- <sup>61</sup> K. Fittschen, P. Zanker, *Katalog der römischen Porträts in den Capitolinischen Museen und den anderen kommunalen Sammlungen der Stadt Rom 1: Kaiser- und Prisenbildnisse* (Mainz 1985) 86-87.
- <sup>62</sup> Fittschen and Zanker (supra n.61) 88-89.
- <sup>63</sup> Supra n.11, 507.
- <sup>64</sup> For a tentative location of a temple of Sarapis in the neighbourhood of Ascalon, see Avi-Yonah, *Gazetteer* 51 s.v. Diocletianupolis, identified with Kh. esh Sheraf.

#### The figured pilasters in the context of Hellenistic and Roman architecture (M.F.)

An attempt to understand the full meaning of the 4 figured pilasters (3 depicting Victories, one depicting Isis-Tyche and a priest of Sarapis) is hampered by the facts that only one pilaster is completely preserved and their position in the building is not precisely known. The 3 pilasters with Victories seem to have imperial connotations, connected with the concept of the *oikoumene*. The fourth pilaster, however, has more of a local reference, to a civic building falling under the protection of a Tyche. Figured pilasters in Roman architecture may be divided into two groups, the first being freestanding pilasters or piers (*Pfeilerfiguren*), the second being true pilasters joined to the adjacent walls.<sup>65</sup> Most belong to the first category. There are relatively few figured pilasters of the second type.<sup>66</sup> As parallels for ours, we may note panels with monumental figures attached to the upper parapet of the Monument of C. Memmius at Ephesos,<sup>67</sup> there, caryatids are thought to symbolize the peoples of Asia Minor defeated by the Romans.<sup>68</sup> Freestanding figured pilasters on the upper storeys of façades are found in the Domitianerterrasse at Ephesos and on the Facade of the Colossal Figures at Corinth. The first was a huge artificial platform for a temple, altar and statue of the Emperor, as part of the imperial cult.<sup>69</sup> The terrace was supported by Atlantes and Caryatids representing Oriental divinities, interpreted as a reference to Roman victory over Oriental peoples. The second, at Corinth, also features figured pilasters with Oriental divinities who seem to represent defeated peoples.<sup>70</sup> The closest parallels for the Ascalon pilasters, however, are to be found in the Severan basilica at Lepcis Magna.<sup>71</sup> Nine pilasters have been found, about 1.5 m high, representing caryatids who differ only in the position of their hands. Shared features in the design of the Lepcis and Ascalon capitals and of other architectural pieces from both sites point towards their common origin. In this regard the marble analysis of pieces from Ascalon (see below) is relevant. Recent work on marble from Lepcis Magna suggests that many items are of Proconnesian and Thasian marble.<sup>72</sup>

#### Other sculptures from Ascalon

Sculptures came from the vicinity of the Basilica even before the excavations of the Palestine Fund. Lady Stanhope discovered an over-lifesize cuirassed statue of an emperor. It was said to have been found in the Temple of Astarte, whose precise site is unknown. This statue survives only in drawings made by her physician Dr Charles Lewis Meryon<sup>73</sup> since Lady Stanhope ordered the statue destroyed. The piece had a cloak (*paludamentum*) on the left shoulder. Griffins flanked a central object (incense-burner or candelabrum?). They were partially covered by the belt (*cingulum*) knotted in front and with its ends looped beneath at left and right. Shoulder straps (*epomides*) with figured decoration on the ends and a gorgoneion with aegis (?) decorated the chest. Below the navel is a stylized acanthus leaf, two short rows of tassels (*pteryges*), and leather straps covering the tunic. A decorated tree-trunk forms a

- <sup>65</sup> H. Büsing, *Die griechische Halbsäule* (Wiesbaden 1970) 56-63, with English terminology in J. MacKenzie, *The architecture of Petra* (Oxford 1990).
- <sup>66</sup> For a list see L. Guerrini, *ArchCl* 13 (1961) 61-63, n.6.
- <sup>67</sup> A. Bammer, W. Alzinger, *Forschungen in Ephesos VII* (Wien 1971) 67-68, figs. 54-55.
- <sup>68</sup> A. Bammer, *Architektur und Gesellschaft in der Antike* (Wien 1974) 113-16.
- <sup>69</sup> A. Bammer, *ÖJh* 52 (1978-80) 6790, figs. 14-15.
- <sup>70</sup> R. Stillwell, *Corinth I (II)* (1941) 86, figs. 50-51, pls. II and IV, dated to the mid 2nd c., but for an Augustan dating of many of the elements, with their reuse in the 2nd c., see H. von Hesberg, *AthMitt* 98 (1983) 232-38.
- <sup>71</sup> J. B. Ward-Perkins, *PBSR* 20 (1952) 120, PLS. XXV-VI; Floriani Squarciapino (supra n.22) 155-63, pls. LXXVI-IX.
- <sup>72</sup> H. M. Walda and S. Walker, *Libyan Studies* 19 (1988) 55-59.
- <sup>73</sup> Meryon (supra n.12) 161.



support next to the left leg. This type of statue appears commonly from the time of Trajan, but this example is more likely to be attributed to a statue of Septimius Severus.<sup>74</sup> Cuirassed statues of emperors often decorated buildings dedicated to their cult, and basilicas could have qualified in this regard. We may note also that Garstang reported a sandalled foot and arm of a cuirassed statue found in the shrine in the E nave of the basilica (the foot measured 96 cm from heel to toes, and was 44 cm high). It should belong to a different statue from the cuirassed statue under discussion, which statue was illustrated as seen noted by Dr. Meyron.<sup>75</sup>

Also prior to the British excavations and evidently in the area of the basilica were found some of the figured pilasters,<sup>76</sup> a statue (now lost) that seems to have been a copy of the Apollo Lykeios type,<sup>77</sup> a torso of Apollo or Dionysus,<sup>78</sup> and a head of Herakles that should be a copy of the Herakles Farnese.<sup>79</sup> There is also a statue of Hermes, with winged cap, sandals, caduceus against his left arm, and purse in his right hand; this too is a type that appears frequently in Roman copies.<sup>80</sup>

Garstang also mentioned the discovery of two statuettes in the area between the basilica and the 'curia', in a building with marble-revetted walls, niches and several fragments of statues.<sup>81</sup> One of the statuettes is a Crouching Aphrodite, found in the area of the basilica (original ht c.50 cm), with some traces of a figure (Eros?) joined to her. It seems to be a copy of an original created by Doidalsas of Bithynia (c.250 B.C.), which became a very popular representation of the goddess.<sup>82</sup> Our piece is the more hybrid version of the type, combining the crouching pose with the hair binding of the Anadyomene type. Our piece appears to be an imitation of the crouching type made in about the late 2nd c. C.E.

A number of other sculptural pieces from Ascalon have no known provenance and will not be included here.

#### Reconstruction of the basilica

Most if not all of the items described above probably belonged to the building excavated by Garstang in 1920-21. Garstang's excavations produced remains of different periods, which may be summarized as follows: an early (Hellenistic?) phase was followed by Herodian building, then a Roman imperial phase, and Byzantine alterations. The main elements found by Garstang comprise a semicircular apsidal hall with tiers of seats (diam. 13.7 m) and two

adjacent rooms; a rectangular building (91 x 37 m) which he termed the "peristyle" but which in fact was a building with three aisles; and a shrine located in the eastern aisle. The main building is oriented N-S with the apse at the S. Entrances connected the main building with the adjacent structures. At least one entrance is found in the wall of the apse facing towards the "peristyle". The "peristyle" and apse may be identified as a basilica and curia, a common pairing in Roman town centers often forming part of the Forum.<sup>83</sup>

Both Garstang and Diplock regarded these remains as part of the *peristyla* erected by Herod at Ascalon as mentioned by Josephus (*BJ* 1. 422; *Ant.* 15. 328-30). At first Garstang considered the structure a *Typhaeum* but subsequently defined it as the peristyle given by Herod with Curia added later.<sup>84</sup> Their Herodian dating was influenced by the discovery of two inscriptions dating to the 1st c. C.E.<sup>85</sup> Watzinger was the first to date the main structure to the late Antonine period, and identifying it as a roofed basilica and apse associated with the imperial cult.<sup>86</sup> Our study of the Corinthian capitals<sup>87</sup> suggested a Severan date, and that date is supported by other architectural details and some of the sculptures as discussed above.

In the absence of renewed excavations the plans published by Garstang have to serve as the basis for a reconstruction of the nature of the building. His plans published in 1924 show the main area as an open court surrounded by a colonnade (the "peristyle"), with heart-shaped columns at its four corners. The plans contain a number of inaccuracies and hypotheses not proven by excavation. Garstang himself stated that he was able to "test the continuity of the walls and other features by probings — a most unsatisfactory method".<sup>88</sup> For a restoration of the colonnade he wrote "that which fits best upon the foundations shows six columns in front and twenty-four columns by the side,<sup>89</sup> including in both cases the double corner piece. With this scheme of arrangement the proportion of column and interspace (between the columns) not only looks well but conforms with an admirable example of this period to be found in the southern temple at Jerash ..." These remarks make it clear that his plan is based upon conjecture since no base was found *in situ*. Even the heart-shaped corner pillars are placed arbitrarily on the plan. Only a single piece is illustrated and mentioned as found in the area of the NE corner,<sup>90</sup> and a pedestal and base of this shape still remains at the N entrance, evidently not far from its original location. A similar block is mentioned for the SE corner but it was part of a Byzantine or Muslim structure;<sup>91</sup> the piece in question is now found in the Curia along with many other items, but it should be attributed to the NW corner of the basilica. These items suggest that the "peristyle" was marked at only two corners — the NW and NE — by heart-shaped pillars, while at the S ends the colonnades would have ended as pilasters against the wall of the apse (fig.23). This design better fits the plan of similar structures (including that of synagogues).<sup>92</sup>

<sup>74</sup> For its workmanship, which seems to be typical of work of western Asia Minor of the Severan period, see K. Stemmer, *Untersuchungen zu Typologie, Chronologie und Ikonographie der Panzerstatuen* (Berlin 1978) 67, type V 21, pl. 42.3. A similar torso has been unearthed at Scythopolis. Other fragments of cuirassed statues are known from Caesarea, Eleutheropolis and Samaria-Sebaste.

<sup>75</sup> As has been correctly pointed out by Wenning (supra n.11) 500 n.8.

<sup>76</sup> Reinach, *RSGR* II, 389 NO.4.

<sup>77</sup> Reinach, *RSGR* II, 1, 96, no.2.

<sup>78</sup> Thiersch (supra n.13) pl. XIV, 1-2; The head, arms and legs are missing. The weight probably rested on the left leg, with the right leg bent. Two locks fall on the shoulders, and parallel tresses cover the nape of the neck.

<sup>79</sup> Thiersch (supra n.13) pl. XV, 4-5. The head was turned to the left; it had short curly hair and beard.

<sup>80</sup> Ht 85 cm. See C. Vermeule and K. Anderson, "Greek and Roman sculpture in the Holy Land," *Burlington Magazine* 123 no. 934 (1981) 7-19. For the type cf. *LMC* V.2, 250, no. 621 272-82 nos. 915, 918a, 972, 974d, etc.

<sup>81</sup> Garstang 1922 (supra n.14) 117: "portions of a giant statue presumed to be that of Herod, another of Apollo ..." and a "draped woman leaning sideways".

<sup>82</sup> For the type see D. M. Brinkerhoff, *Hellenistic statues of Aphrodite. Studies in the history of their stylistic development* (New York 1978) 35, and doubts expressed by B. Ridgway, *Roman copies of Greek sculpture: the problem of the originals* (Ann Arbor 1984) 23 and her *Hellenistic sculpture I. The styles of circa 331-200 B.C.* (Bristol 1990) 230-32, pl. 112.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. J. B. Ward-Perkins and M. Ballance, "The Caesareum of Cyrene and the Basilica of Cremna," *PBSR* 26 (1958) 137-94. See also the grouping of Basilica Curia and Forum of the 3rd century at Samaria-Sebaste (with a Herodian predecessor).

<sup>84</sup> Garstang 1921 (supra n.14) 73-74; 1922, 114-15; id., 1924, 25.

<sup>85</sup> D. G. Hogarth, "Greek inscriptions from Askalon," *PEFQS* 1922, 22-23; cf. P. R. Diplock 1971 (supra n.38) 13-16.

<sup>86</sup> Watzinger (supra n.52) 97-98.

<sup>87</sup> Fischer 1990 (supra n.1) 49.

<sup>88</sup> Garstang 1924 (supra n.14), 24.

<sup>89</sup> Note however that in an earlier report (1922, 117) he had proposed a restoration of 8 by 32 columns.

<sup>90</sup> Garstang 1924 (supra n.14), 26 fig.1.

<sup>91</sup> Garstang 1924 (supra n.14), 33.

<sup>92</sup> For plans of basilicas see P. Gros, *Byrsa III* (CollEFR, Rome 1985) fig.66; for synagogues see L. I. Levine (ed.), *Ancient synagogues revealed* (Jerusalem 1981) plans on pp. 51, 53.

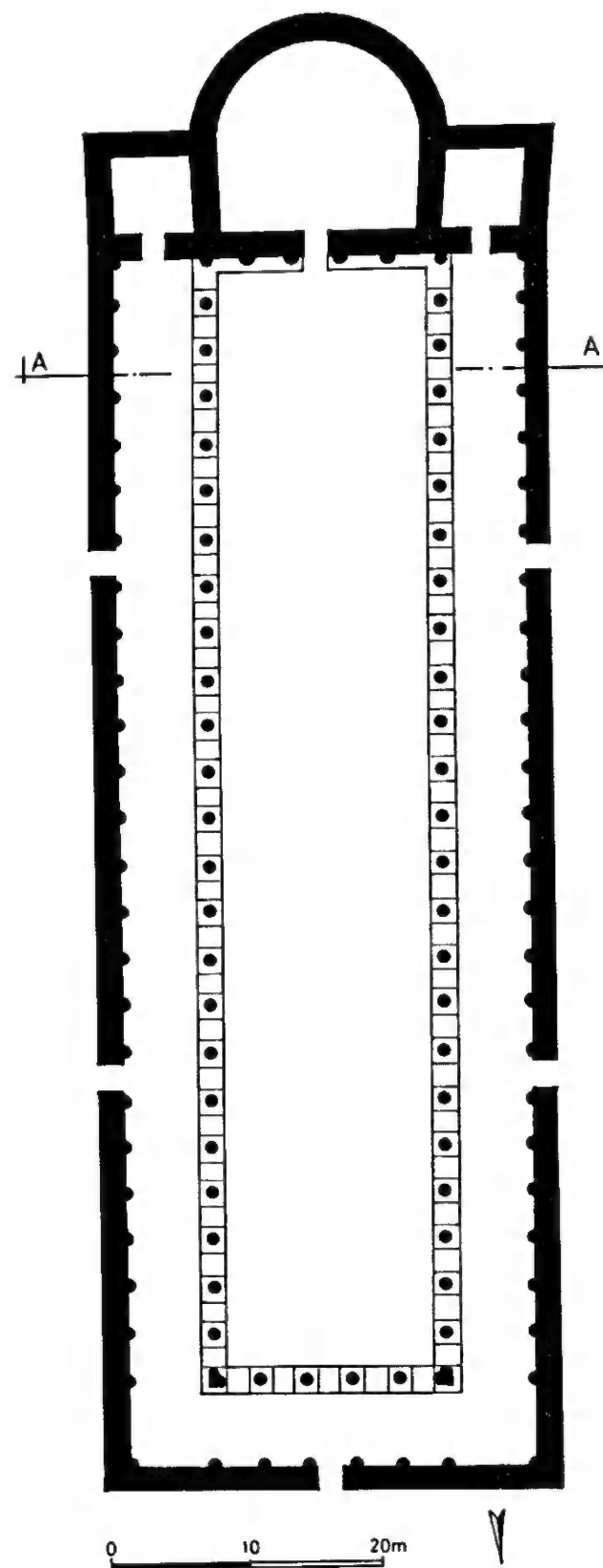


Fig. 23. Plan of the basilica (adapted from Garstang 1924).

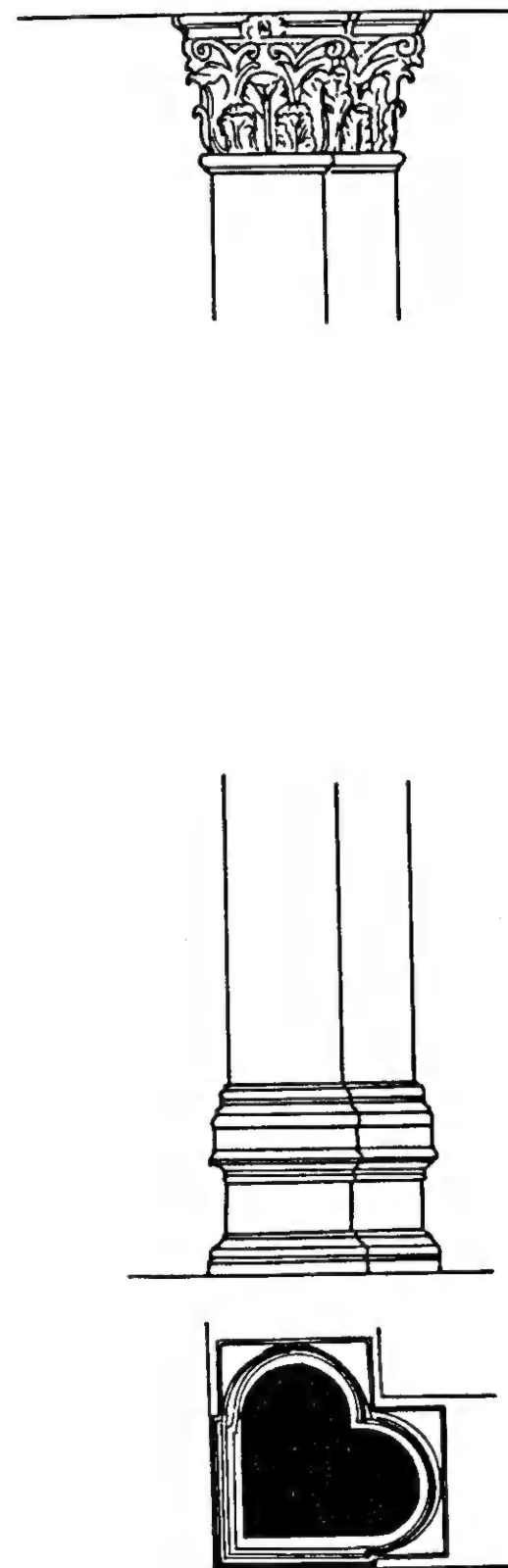


Fig. 24. Drawing of the main order (adapted from Garstang 1924, pl. III).

This particular design to solve the problem of columns meeting at corners was first adopted by Hellenistic architects, and is widely used in Herodian triclinia and at Gamla.<sup>93</sup> It reappears in some Galilean synagogues of the 3rd c. and is also found in Roman basilicas (e.g. Samaria and a recently excavated structure at Dor<sup>94</sup>). A distinction should be made between the use of heart-shaped columns in triclinia or palaestras, which were peristyles with central area left unroofed, and structures where the columns supported the roof. Garstang's use of the term "peristyle" for our structure implied an unroofed building, but the available evidence suggests that it was an elongated hall whose columns were attached at the S short end by means of pilasters while at the N end were set two freestanding heart-shaped corner pillars. This arrangement would differ from that of the Severan basilica at Lepcis Magna where pilasters were employed on both short sides of the hall but it would be quite similar to some Galilean synagogues.

The architectural finds also suggest that this was a double-storeyed building, and it is also possible to add a third, "attic" storey. The following dimensions (in meters) may be proposed for the various parts of the elevation:

Lower D of the column of the first storey	0.80 = 1 modulus
H of main order (fig. 24)	8.35 (exists)
architrave (half modulus)	0.40 (exists)
frieze (half modulus)	0.40 (exists)
entablature (1 modulus)	0.80 (fragmentary)
Order of the second storey	6.00 (exists)
architrave	0.30 (hypothetical)
frieze	0.30 (hypothetical)
entablature	0.60 (hypothetical)
Order of the third storey	4.00 (exists)
attic, figured pilasters	21.15 m
Total	

The height of the orders above the central nave would give a height for the roof of about 30 m.

If it is accepted that the evidence points to a typical basilical structure, its reconstruction must be attempted on the analogy of other basilicas. Basilicas are oblong, and according to Vitruvius a ratio of 1 to 3 between portico and width of the central nave is to be preferred. The portico is raised to a height of two storeys around the central nave, and there may be windows above the upper gallery.<sup>95</sup> The surviving evidence suggests that the Ascalon building had two main storeys and a third containing the pilasters (fig. 25). This reconstruction differs from those by Diplock (fig. 26) and Stager (fig. 27). Garstang already established that the order of the first storey, from the pedestal and base to the capital, measured 8.35 m (fig. 24).<sup>96</sup> Garstang also stressed that there were considerable variations in the dimensions of the different items and attributed them to inaccurate workmanship, without considering the possibility of a second storey. To reconstruct the second storey, the starting-point is Vitruvius' principle (Book 5.1) that the upper order is one fourth lower than the main order. This basic relationship is found in many surviving basilicas, including the Basilica Ulpia in Rome, the Severan basilica at Lepcis Magna, the basilica on the Byrsa at Carthage, and that at Poseidonia-Paestum.

<sup>93</sup> Levine (supra n.92) 31.

<sup>94</sup> E. Stern and I. Sharon, "Tel Dor, 1992: preliminary report," *IEJ* 43 (1993) 129-31, figs. 2-4 (captions reversed).

<sup>95</sup> F. Ohr, "Die Form der Basilika bei Vitruv," *BonnJb* 175 (1975) 113-27.

<sup>96</sup> Garstang 1924 (supra n.14), 26.



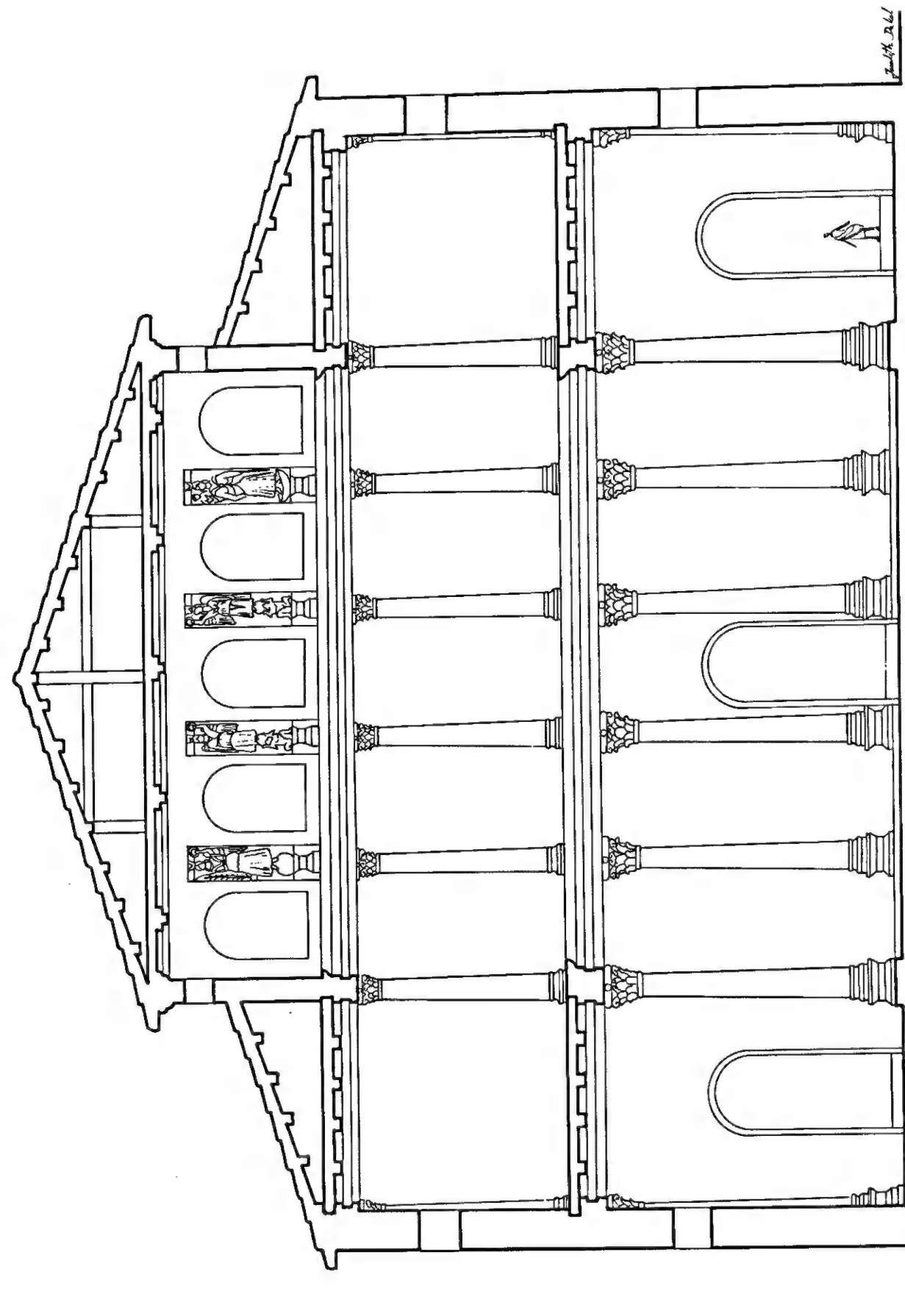


Fig.25. Proposed reconstruction of the Basilica and the façade of the figured pilasters.

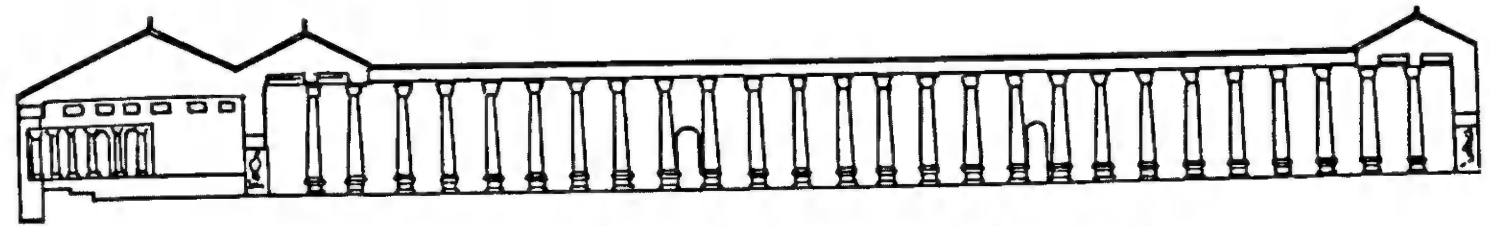


Fig.26. Proposed reconstruction of the basilica by Diplock (adapted from Diplock 1971, pl. IX).

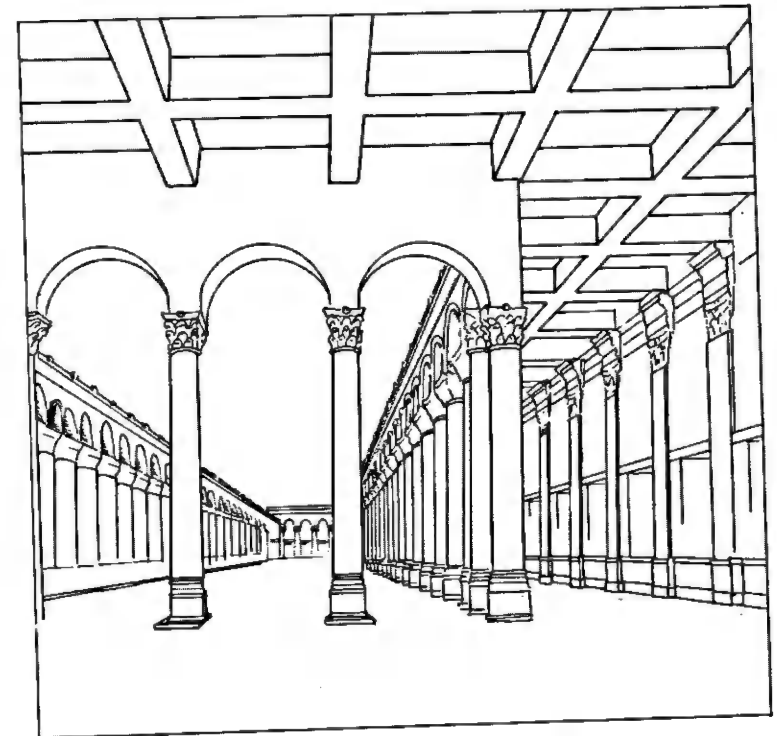


Fig.27. Proposed reconstruction of the basilica by Stager (adapted from Stager, BAR 1991, fig. on p.40).

Our reconstruction must remain hypothetical in many respects, particularly since many details are lacking; only further excavation can provide further information upon which to base a more secure reconstruction. The main order of the building would have contained about 50 pedestals, bases, columns and capitals, but only 25 capitals of different sizes have been recorded. Our reconstruction frees the wall of the apse from the columns in front of it, so that they would not have hidden its design that resembled a *scaenae frons*. The roofing probably had to overcome similar difficulties to those noted for other basilicas.<sup>97</sup> The wide span of the central nave (c.18 m) probably was covered by a wooden ceiling and a wooden roof with tiles; they would have made use of cross-beams, rafters, and secondary timbers over the rafters.

*The location of the pilasters and the Bildprogramm of the Basilica*

Two alternatives have been proposed for the figured pilasters. Garstang proposed locating them generally according to their findspots.<sup>98</sup> Thus our items A and C were placed as decorations of the fronts of the doorjambes between the portals that led from the basilica to the

<sup>97</sup> Gros (supra n.92) 100-1.

<sup>98</sup> Garstang 1924 (supra n.14), 28, pl. II, plan.

curia, while item D decorated one of the lateral doorways leading east. He also mentioned (but did not prefer) a possibility of placing them opposite one another facing across the doorway. Diplock however followed Garstang's second proposal and placed them as inner doorjambs facing one another in those doorways (fig. 26).<sup>99</sup> Stager proposed to locate items A and C (?) as flanking a doorway in the public building (fig. 27).<sup>100</sup> Yet this kind of decoration of doorways is not paralleled at other Hellenistic and Roman sites, and triumphal arches should not be considered analogous.

The monumental size of the figured pilasters and the character of their decoration seems rather to suggest that they would have been placed in an elevated position. I propose that they were placed in the attic of the south wall of the central nave. This location would allow them to be viewed frontally by visitors. Additional pilasters, if any, would have been placed above the aisles. This proposal conforms with Ward-Perkins' proposal to locate the pilasters of the Severan basilica at Lepcis Magna in the attic of the central nave of the basilica, as "their elongated proportions suggest that they were probably used at a considerable height above the ground".<sup>101</sup> Such a solution at Ascalon puts the figured pilasters in a place suiting their size and design. Since their height is 3.6 m, they could have been seen from the ground and from the galleries along the second storey of the central nave.

The cuirassed statue and the other colossal statues, of which only fragments are known, may be associated with the imperial cult in this building. The pilasters should also be understood in connection with the historical context of the Severan period. The key to their interpretation seems to be the connection between *Victoriae* and *Isis-Tyche*. The victories are depicted in many styles with many of their attributes: they are shown landing on the globe, with palm branch, and/or with wreath. All of these carry an imperial message.<sup>102</sup> Victories on a globe are an imperial attribute, the globe representing the imperial force of the oecumene; *Victoriae* with palm branches and wreaths are common representations of imperial victory. In the case of the best preserved pilaster, where *Victoria* is shown on the globe supported by a kneeling *Atlas*, another element of imperial victory is present — the enemy in the figure of the kneeling *Atlas* bearing the heavy burden as a punishment.<sup>103</sup> The pilaster depicting *Isis-Tyche* would represent the local, civic counterpart of this *Bildprogramm*. The cult of *Tyche* as a city goddess is found in most cities of Palestine. *Tyche* represented the city's essential elements as connected with the imperial power. At Ascalon *Isis-Tyche* is probably linked with the other representations of imperial victory. Note also at Caesarea the *Tyche* holding a portrait of the emperor, reflecting the linkage between the empire and its major cult. The types of *Tyche* in the art of Roman Palestine are eclectic: they combine elements of various deities such as *Fortuna*, *Astarte*, *Isis*, and others.<sup>104</sup> Perhaps the preference shown by Severan emperors for *Isis* and her entourage had a direct impact on the representations of the *Tychai* of the cities. In any event, the theme of the decoration of the basilica seems to be the imperial oikoumene linked to the imperial cult combined with the civic pride of the citizens. Augustus was responsible initially for creating and installing a well-organized imperial cult to bind the empire together.<sup>105</sup> Following Augustus' example in changing the aspect of Rome herself, cities of marble were

<sup>99</sup> Diplock 1971 (supra n.38), 14, pls. IX-X.

<sup>100</sup> L. E. Stager, *BAR* 1991, p.40.

<sup>101</sup> Ward Perkins (supra n.71) 120. This is supported by Floriani Squarciapino (supra n.22) 155-63.

<sup>102</sup> Hölscher (supra n.44) 22 n.116; 25, 41-47 and passim. A *Victoria Augusta* is recorded in the interior of the basilica of Thamugadi: see G. Zimmer, *Locus dato decreto decurionum. Zur Statuenaufstellung zweier Forumsanlagen im römischen Afrika* (München 1989) 42.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Schneider (supra n.38) 48, n.232.

<sup>104</sup> R. Gersht, "The *Tyche* of Caesarea Maritima," *PEQ* 116 (1984) 110-14; R. Wenning, "Die Stadtgöttin von Caesarea Maritima," *Boreas* 9 (1986) 113-29.

<sup>105</sup> P. Zanker, *The power of images in the age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor 1988) 74-76 and fig.60.



Fig.28. Inscription of acclamation.

built throughout the empire as signs of a new self assurance; at the same time competition between cities left to the provincial aristocracy the rôle of intermediary in accomplishing imperial building policy.<sup>106</sup>

Already Vitruvius mentions the need for each town to have a shrine in the middle of the rear wall of its basilica. Under the empire the imperial cult was responsible for transforming civic spaces in almost every major town.<sup>107</sup> At Ephesus a royal portico was dedicated to *Artemis*, *Augustus* and *Tiberius*; at Rhodiapolis a temple and cult-statues were dedicated to *Asclepius*, *Hygeia*, the *Sebastoi* and the city. New temples were dedicated to the emperor; shrines were attached to older temples. Porticoes, staircases, colonnades and so on were dedicated to the imperial cult. In the Greek East the *Kaisersaal* took over the cult from that of the Hellenistic ruler. Fora, basilicas and their associated temples were the objects of new architectural and sculptural decoration, and imperial images became a necessity in basilicas. We may assume that the cuirassed statue destroyed by Lady Stanhope belonged to this complex and added a clear imperial message since it is very rare for any but the emperor to be shown in armour. It was precisely in the Severan period when the good relationship between the imperial house and provincial cities reached its apogee. The Severans actively encouraged civic development and new constructions, and in Palestine the Severan age was one of the most flourishing. Several towns were raised in status or received new privileges. The road system was further developed, as milestones and road installations show.<sup>108</sup> Septimius himself visited the country twice, first (in 194/95) punishing cities that supported *Pescennius Niger* and rewarding those who had supported himself, and then (between 199 and 202) restoring cities, even those which had suffered earlier. The stylistic features which connect the portrait of the priest of *Sarapis* with portraits of the young *Caracalla* (around 208) would suggest that our basilica was being erected towards the end of the reign of *Septimius Severus*. A marble slab (fig.28) from the area of the basilica, decorated with an inscribed medallion framed by acanthus leaves, reads in Greek:  $\text{Ἀὐξί} / \text{Ἀσκαλ(ὸν)} / \text{Ἀὐξί} / \text{Ῥώμη}$ , or "Advance, Ascalon!"

<sup>106</sup> Zanker (supra n.105) 323-24 and 302-7; see also S. Walker, "The burden of Roman grandeur: aspects of public building in the cities of Asia and Achaia," in A. King and M. Henig (edd.), *The Roman west in the third century* (BAR S109, Oxford 1981) 190, 192.

<sup>107</sup> S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and power. The Roman imperial cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge 1984) 133-40.

<sup>108</sup> B. Isaac, *The limits of empire* (Oxford 1990) 359.



Advance, Rome!"<sup>109</sup> This formula, an acclamation, is one commonly used both for cities as well as for private individuals. It seems to sum up the message of the basilica, combining the imperial message with the personification of the city through its Tyche. Ascalon praises the imperial power, victorious over all its enemies, and Isis-Tyche and her attendants expect to enjoy the ensuing stability thanks to the imperial power. The building combines imperial and civic ideas. Basilicas were the ideal buildings to propagate this message, and marble was the medium that placed Ascalon on a par with the other great cities of the Roman world.

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#### PROVENANCE OF MARBLE PIECES

by Ze'ev Pearl

The sources of the marble items were determined by the multimethod approach, as described in previous publications (e.g. *Caesarea Papers* (JRA Suppl. 5, 1992) 214-15). This approach uses several geochemical, petrographical and architectural calibrations in order to determine the source quarry. It was adopted because some overlap exists in the ranges of  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  values between quarries. Nevertheless stable isotope analysis remains of prime importance as it is the only technique for which an extensive data-base is available. That data base includes the stable isotope composition of marble samples from the major 22 white marble quarries operated in the classical world.<sup>110</sup> For some samples the ratio of calcite to dolomite was determined by X-ray diffraction analysis. Mn contents were also measured by electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR). For these techniques only a small sample is required, while EPR is non-destructive. Samples were crushed with a mortar and pestle to fine powder, and aliquots were taken for stable isotope, XRD and EPR analyses. The carbon and oxygen isotopes in marble were measured using the conventional phosphoric acid method.<sup>111</sup> The  $\text{CO}_2$  was analysed in a Varian M250 mass spectrometer, and the results are reported using the conventional (delta) notation relative to the PDB standard. Isotope values were calibrated using the NBS calcite standard ( $\delta^{18}\text{O} = -2.20$ ;  $\delta^{13}\text{C} = +1.96$ ). Reproducibility of duplicate samples is better than 0.1 per mil for  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and 0.15 mil for  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ . An aliquot of the powder was analysed by a standard XRD procedure with a fully computerized automatic Rigaku 505 diffractometer over the range  $2\theta = 26^\circ - 32^\circ$  at a rate of one  $^\circ/\text{min}$ . Weight percent dolomite / (dolomite + calcite) ratio was calculated using the areas under the peaks  $2\theta + 30.94$  and  $29.44$  based on the formula of Weber and Smith.<sup>112</sup> Mn contents were determined by EPR spectroscopy using a Varian E-12 spectrometer. The EPR spectrum of carbonates consists of 6 peaks. Quantification was done on the low magnetic field peak against the NBS 88 standard.<sup>113</sup> A computerized system was used for spectrum collection, baseline correction, and double integration. Analytical error is about 10%.

The following steps were followed in order to determine the marble source of each artifact and the homogeneity in the isotopic signature of groups of artifacts:

<sup>109</sup> It is now found in the open-air museum of Afridar: see Hogarth, *PEFQS* 1922, 23.

<sup>110</sup> Data bases used include N. Herz, "Carbon and oxygen isotopic ratios: a data base for classical Greek and Roman marble," *Archaeometry* 29 (1987) 35-43; see also R. V. Lloyd *et al.*, "ESR Spectroscopy and X-ray powder diffractometry for marble provenance determination," in Herz and Waelkens (edd.), *Classical marble: geochemistry, technology, trade* (Dordrecht 1988) 369-77.

<sup>111</sup> J. M. McCrea, "On the isotopic chemistry of carbonates and a paleotemperature scale," *Journal of Chemical Physics* 18 (1950) 849-57.

<sup>112</sup> J. N. Weber and F. G. Smith, "Rapid determination of calcite dolomite ratios in sedimentary rocks," *Journal of sedimental petrology* 31 (1961) 130-32.

<sup>113</sup> Lloyd *et al.* (supra n.110).

1. The quarry isotopic fingerprint ( $Q_i$ ) was determined by a convex hull drawn through the extreme  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  values for each quarry. These data were taken from Herz's data-base.

2. The artifact isotopic composition ( $A_i$ ) was compared with the quarry's fingerprint ( $Q_i$ ) in order to determine if  $A_i$  could be attributed to a certain  $Q_i$ .

3. The Mn content of the artifact was compared with the data of the Mn source quarries compiled by Pearl and Magaritz<sup>114</sup> while the ratios of calcite to dolomite were compared with the data of Lloyd *et al.* These steps were performed for some artifacts to confirm the origin determined from their isotopic composition.

4. Some groups of artifacts had been defined according to their attribution to the same building, such as the theatre and the monument at Scythopolis, while others were studies of similar elements (such as Corinthian capitals or sarcophagi from Caesarea). In order to compare the relative homogeneity between different groups, the ranges and variations in their  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  values were calculated.

5. A F-test (two tailed) was undertaken to evaluate whether the variations in the isotopic signature of groups of artifacts are significantly different from that of the variation in the isotopic signature of their quarry. A significantly smaller variation for the artifacts indicates that their origin is from a restricted part of the quarry, whereas insignificant differences show that the artifacts could have come from any part of the quarry. This approach implicitly assumes that the sample data base represents the stable isotope signature of the entire quarry.

The marble origin of the following pieces could be established:

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Two pedestals with Attic-Ionic bases   | Marmara             |
| 2. One heart-shaped pedestal with base  | Marmara             |
| 3. Fragment of architrave-frieze  | Marmara             |
| 4. The largest Corinthian capitals (VAa and VEa)  | Marmara             |
| (Note that one damaged capital of this group seems to belong to one of the heart-shaped corner pilasters) |                     |
| 5. The smaller capitals (IIIDc)   | Marmara             |
| 6. Figured pilaster A   | Marmara             |
| 7. Figured pilaster C   | Aphrodisias         |
| 8. Figured pilaster D   | Pentelikon          |
| 9. Asclepios sculpture  | Afyon (Aphrodisias) |
| 10. Attic sarcophagus   | Afyon               |
| 11. Lid of Attic sarcophagus  | Pentelikon          |
| 12. Roman sarcophagus of stadtrömisch type  | Marmara             |
| 13. Proconnesian sarcophagus in quarry state  | Marmara             |
| 14. Marble slab from area of Basilica, decorated with inscribed medallion                                 | Afyon (Aphrodisias) |

The above examination points to a differentiated use of marble between architecture and sculpture. Marble from Marmara (Proconnesos) was used chiefly for architectural decoration, while for sculpture both Greek Pentelic and Asia Minor marbles were used. This picture is consistent with the evidence from other parts of Roman Palestine and with Lepcis Magna where in the 2nd c. there was an increase in the import of Proconnesian marble.<sup>115</sup> The common marble sources for the marble found here and at Lepcis Magna are worthy of note.

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<sup>114</sup> Z. Pearl and M. Magaritz, "Stable isotopes and the Roman marble trade, evidence from Scythopolis and Caesarea, Israel," *The Geochemical society, special publication no.3* (1991) 295-303.

<sup>115</sup> Walda and Walker, *Libyan Studies* 1984, 81-92 and 19 (1988) 55-59.

## Acknowledgements

This paper is part of a larger research project on architectural decoration in Israel during the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods. It is possible thanks to the generosity of the Alexander-von-Humboldt Foundation and the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD). This paper was written during a leave spent at the University of Konstanz and the DAI, Berlin in 1991-92. I am indebted to these institutions and in particular to Professors W. Schuller (Konstanz) and H. Kyrieleis (Berlin) for their support. I am also grateful to N. de Chaisemartin, S. Chmelnitzky, J. Dentzer, P. Grunwald, W. D. Heilmeyer, A. Hoffmann, A. Krug, G. Grimm, K. Schefold, and D. Theodorescu for their valuable comments and assistance. I am grateful to J. Humphrey for his editing of the manuscript. Photographs are by the author and published by courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority. My thanks go to R. Peled for her help. Drawings are by S. Chmelnitzky (Berlin) and J. Dekel (Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University).

## The synagogues at Capernaum and Meroth and the dating of the Galilean synagogue<sup>1</sup>

Yoram Tsafrir

## Introduction

In 1988 a detailed description (though not a full report) on the excavations of the synagogue at Meroth in the Upper Galilee was published.<sup>2</sup> The excavations added further data that warrant a reconsideration of the long-standing controversy surrounding the date of synagogues in the Galilee. The controversy focused on the dating of synagogues of the so-called "Galilean type", including Capernaum, Chorazin, Meron, Kfar Bar'am, Horvat ha-'Ammudim, and others. At first they were dated on circumstantial, historical and stylistic grounds to the 2nd-3rd c. and defined as "Synagogues of the early type".<sup>3</sup> Other synagogues, such as Bet Alpha, Ma'oz Haim, Nirim, Gaza and others, were labelled "Synagogues of the later type". The latter were dated by solid epigraphic, ceramic and numismatic evidence to the 5th-6th c.<sup>4</sup>

Synagogues of the "early type" are concentrated in the north: in the Galilee, the Golan, and even on Mount Carmel.<sup>5</sup> Not one of the characteristic "later synagogues" was located in the Galilee (except perhaps the later synagogue of the early Islamic period at Hammat Tiberias<sup>6</sup>). The "early type" is characterized by the use of ashlar building, stone paving, internal columns arranged parallel to the side and back walls, rich architectural decoration in stone, but the most characteristic feature was the location of the façade and the main doors in the south, toward Jerusalem.

Synagogues of the "later type" had a modest external appearance, an inner arrangement similar to that of the basilical church, and decorative mosaic floors. There were also other synagogues that did not fit either of these two groups. They were defined as "synagogues of the transitional type". These synagogues have no particular characteristics in common but share various features of the other two types. Some of them (mostly in Judea) were built as "broad houses" with the entrance in the long wall. They are generally dated to the 4th-5th c.

- 1 This article is a revised updated version of an article published in *Eretz Israel* 20 (Yadin memorial volume) (Jerusalem 1989) 337-44 (Hebrew).
- 2 Z. Ilan and E. Damati, *Meroth, the ancient Jewish village* (Tel Aviv 1988) esp. 43-71 (Hebrew, with English summary). See also Z. Ilan, "The ancient synagogue and Bet Midrash at Meroth" in A. Oppenheimer, A. Kasher and U. Rappaport (edd.), *Ancient synagogues — collected essays* (Jerusalem 1988) 231-66 (Hebrew); id., "Ancient Meroth," *New encyclopedia* 2 (Jerusalem 1993) 1028-31.
- 3 See, for example, M. Avi-Yonah in id. and S. Yeivin, *The antiquities of our land* (Tel Aviv 1955) 220-36 (Hebrew); id., "The architecture of ancient synagogues in Palestine and the Diaspora," in C. Roth (ed.), *Jewish art* 155-90; id., "Ancient synagogues," *Ariel* 32 (1973) 32-33 (= *Art in Ancient Palestine* [Jerusalem 1981] 272-73). For Galilean synagogues, see also the formative research of H. Kohl and C. Watzinger, *Antike Synagogen in Galilaea* (Leipzig 1916); G. Foerster, "Galilean synagogues" in A. Shmulei, A. Sofer and N. Kleiot (edd.), *Lands of Galilee* (Haifa 1984) 231-56 (Hebrew); id., "The architecture of the synagogue in its late Roman setting in Palestine" in L. I. Levine, *The synagogue in late antiquity* (Philadelphia 1987) 139-46; R. Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish art and archaeology in the land of Israel* (Leiden 1988) 135 ff.
- 4 Avi-Yonah (supra n.3). For a general discussion of this problem, see Y. Tsafrir, *Eretz Israel from the destruction of the Second Temple to the Muslim Conquest* 2: *Archaeology and art* (Jerusalem 1984) 165-89, 285-99 (Hebrew).
- 5 S. Dar and Y. Mintzker, "The synagogue of Hurvat Sumaqa," in R. Hachlili (ed.), *Ancient synagogues in Israel, third to seventh century C.E.* (BAR S499, Oxford 1989) 17-20; S. Dar, "Sumaqa, Horvat," *New encyclopedia* 4, pp. 1412-15.
- 6 See M. Dothan, "The synagogues at Hamath Tiberias," *Qadmoniot* 4 (1968) 116-23, esp. 123 (plan).



Since the above typology was proposed, work on synagogues has advanced and many of its points are no longer accepted. The chronological framework has been particularly doubted. It has become clear that different kinds of synagogues were in use and even being built at about the same time. Even scholars who accept the above typology are unable to point to a single building of the "early type" dated by archaeological means to the 2nd c. Structures related to the 2nd c. have a simple plan which does not belong to one of the above types.<sup>7</sup> It seems that the above-mentioned "Galilean synagogues" should be dated to the 3rd and first half of the 4th c.

Recent research stresses regional characteristics. Regionalism, based on data from various parts of Israel, can account for much of the formal variety that exists between synagogues in the Galilee, the valley of Bet Shean, Judea or Samaria. It has become clear that not only the chronological factor but also local traditions of masonry and the quality of materials available in each region influenced the form of the synagogue.<sup>8</sup>

The emergence of new data has made the classification of synagogues more difficult. There are now issues other than simply the chronological to consider, yet the chronological factors should not be ignored entirely in favour of regionalism.

This article is dedicated to the study of one group, the so-called Galilean synagogues. It intends to show that a careful examination of the data supports the "conservative" approach, showing that this group does belong to the "early type".

#### The stratigraphy of the synagogue at Capernaum

The most important and controversial issue is the date of the synagogue at Capernaum. While many Galilean synagogues were dated by their excavators on the basis of archaeological evidence to the second half of the 3rd c., this synagogue, the most famous example of the "early type", was dated by its excavators to a later period. V. Corbo, who excavated the synagogue from 1968, and S. Loffreda, who published the ceramic material, dated its foundation to the second half of the 4th c. and more specifically to the reign of Julian (361-63). They showed clearly that the synagogue was built in several stages according to a pre-planned programme. First, the synagogue proper was completed, then the entrance platform and courtyard. Finally the paving of the porticoed courtyard was completed after 474.<sup>9</sup> The construction activities therefore lasted, according to the excavators, more than 110 years.

- <sup>7</sup> See for example the 2nd-c. synagogue at Nabrathein: E. M. Meyers, "The current state of Galilean synagogue studies," in Levine (supra n.3) 132 and pl. 9.9. Elsewhere (Tsafrir [supra n.4] 176-77 and "The Byzantine setting and its influence on ancient synagogues," in Levine, *The synagogue in late antiquity* (supra n.3) 148, I suggested that these early synagogues of the 2nd c. were probably "congregational buildings", shaped as private houses, of the kind of the early synagogue at Dura Europos and the Christian structures of the *domus ecclesiae*.
- <sup>8</sup> Some regional considerations have been accepted from the beginning, as is shown by the terms "Galilean synagogues" and "Judean synagogues", etc. See also A. Kloner, "Ancient synagogues in Israel, an archaeological survey" in L. I. Levine, *Ancient synagogues revealed* (Jerusalem 1981) 11-18; Ilan (supra n.2) 52, 236, 1029 respectively; L. I. Levine, "Synagogues" in *New encyclopedia* 4, 1422-23. Compare the classification of the Samaritan synagogues: Y. Magen, "Samaritan synagogues" in F. Manns and E. Alliata, *Early Christianity in context: monuments and documents* (Jerusalem 1993) 193-230.
- <sup>9</sup> See V. Corbo, *Cafarnaon I* (Jerusalem 1975) 113-70. Of the many studies in favour of a later dating of the synagogue, I mention also S. Loffreda in *LibAnn* 22 (1972) 5-22; id., *IEJ* 23 (1973) 37-42; V. Corbo in *Studia Hierosolymitana* 1 (Jerusalem 1976) 159-76; *LibAnn* 32 (1982) 427-66; *Studia Hierosolymitana* 3 (Jerusalem 1982) 313-57; *LibAnn* 34 (1984) 371-84, and *LibAnn* 36 (1986) 297-308. See also the ceramic report by S. Loffreda, *Cafarnaon II, Ceramica* (Jerusalem 1974) and the numismatic report by A. Spijkerman, "La moneta della sinagoga di Cafarnaon," in V. Corbo (ed.), *La sinagoga di Cafarnaon*

The crucial archaeological evidence is the large number of 4th-5th c. coins found in the fill underneath the pavement of the synagogue, the courtyard and the platform in front of the entrance. The latest, issued in 474, provided a *terminus ante quem* for the completion of the synagogue.<sup>10</sup> This discovery placed the supporters of the conventional typology in a difficult position. Corbo and Loffreda stressed more than once the chief significance of their discovery for the dating of Galilean synagogues in general, and as a result "regionalism" could not be used as an argument by scholars who accepted a later date for Capernaum but supported the above-mentioned classification in general. If Capernaum were late, all the other synagogues would have to be late, since Capernaum is the largest, most lavish, and considered by many as one of the earliest and most formative synagogues of the "early type".

The proponents of the traditional chronological classification have explained the discovery of late coins beneath the pavement (which according to them had been put down many years before the coins were minted) by the assumption that the floor was renovated at a late date. By this interpretation the synagogue was partially destroyed perhaps in the earthquake of 363.<sup>11</sup> It would then have lain in ruins for a period, and at that time the upper part of the fill beneath the floor was disturbed. Then a new pavement was put down not before the early 5th c., and in the courtyard the latest repairs dated after 474.<sup>12</sup>

For such an hypothesis no archaeological proof has come from the site, although similar phenomena are attested elsewhere.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the interpretation of Corbo and Loffreda is not as clear-cut as they would have wished, though they should be praised for publishing their finds in detail and promptly. Their later reports, even if preliminary, permit a reconsideration of the validity of the conclusions which were so influential in the early stages of the debate. Such a reconsideration seems to be necessary since, despite the

(Jerusalem 1970) 125-39. Compare the critical reviews following the first seasons of excavations: G. Foerster, "Notes on recent excavations at Capernaum," *IEJ* 21 (1971) 207-11; M. Avi-Yonah, "Editor's note," *IEJ* 23 (1973) 43-45. See also the recent summary by S. Loffreda, "Capernaum" in the *New encyclopedia* 1 (Jerusalem 1993) 291-95.

- <sup>10</sup> S. Loffreda, "Potsherds from a sealed level of the synagogue at Capharnaum," *LibAnn* 29 (1979) 215-20. In a series of articles D. Chen supported the later dating of the synagogue of Capernaum (and other synagogues) by means of metrological and mathematical calculations. See recently D. Chen, "Dating synagogues in Galilee: on the evidence from Meroth and Capernaum," *LibAnn* 40 (1990) 349-55. Chen's effort to detect a mathematical code, based on the calculation (using even fractions, powers and roots) of moduli, in the plan of every religious building he has analysed, seems to be far from convincing. See Y. Tsafrir, "On the pre-planning of ancient churches and synagogues, a test case: the northern church at Rehovot in the Negev," in G. C. Bottini, L. Di Segni and E. Alliata (edd.), *Christian archaeology in the Holy Land. New discoveries* (V. Corbo volume, Jerusalem 1990) 535-44 with bibliography.
- <sup>11</sup> This earthquake is well known in ancient sources. A Syriac manuscript published by S. Brock mentions cities partially destroyed in the region, among them Tiberias and its *chora*. S. Brock, "A letter attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem," *BSAOS* 40 (1967) 267-86, esp. 271 (transl. p.276). See also Foerster, Galilean synagogues (supra n.3), Tsafrir (supra n.4) p.174. For the possible effects of this earthquake on Bet She'an not far to the south, see G. Foerster and Y. Tsafrir, "The Bet Shean excavation project (1989-1991) - city center (north): excavations of the Hebrew University Expedition," *ESI* 11 (1993) 6.
- <sup>12</sup> Loffreda (supra n.10).
- <sup>13</sup> The discovery of later 6th-7th c. coins and pottery under the pavements of 2nd and 4th c. streets in Bet Shean is very common. In many sections cut into the pavements of streets we found that the ceramic and numismatic material in the lower layers of the fill under the street was from the time of the construction of the street while the material in the upper layer underneath the slabs contained later coins and pottery which intruded during the course of repairs and repavings. See for example *ESI* 9 (1989/90) 120-21.

accumulation of new data, the excavators' interpretation of the history and chronology of the synagogue has not changed.

As is well known, the excavators divided their finds into 3 major stages:

- A. Residential buildings of the village of Capernaum, which were erased in order to make room for the construction of the synagogue;
- B. The fill of the platform upon which the synagogue was built;
- C. The mortar layer which sealed the fill and served as a bedding for the flagstones of the pavement.<sup>14</sup>

In 1982, a critical review of the excavators' interpretation was published. The reviewer, J. Loffreda, argued that the excavators' interpretation of the stratigraphy was incorrect. He pointed out that the excavators had found 4th-century coins in the fill of the platform (stratum B) and in the mortar layer (stratum C), but that these coins were not found in the same context as the 4th-century coins found in the fill of the platform (stratum B). He concluded that the excavators' interpretation of the stratigraphy was incorrect and that the synagogue was built in the 4th century.

In their later work it became clear that this interpretation was wrong. The buildings of stratum A were then correctly related by the excavators to the Hellenistic and early Roman periods.<sup>15</sup> According to Corbo's report, there was no penetration of later material into the level of the early structures. Thus, the strongest argument by the excavators against the critics was refuted by their own discoveries.

The main argument in favour of a late date of the synagogue thus remained the finds from the fill under the pavement. Under the walls of the synagogue (called the "white synagogue" from the colour of its limestone ashlar), a black wall of basalt was found (c.1.20-1.30 m thick). This wall is built of 3 courses of roughly dressed stones and gravel. Its construction is not homogeneous but in general the wall is massive, cemented with mud mortar and partially coated by a smooth layer of plaster. It is c.1.2 m high. Similar walls, though less massive, were found under most of the stylobates that carried the synagogue's inner colonnade. The wall seems to belong to the outer frame of the platform constituting the synagogue's foundation, containing the fill of earth and stones. Indeed, it was first interpreted by the excavators as part of the platform upon which the "white synagogue" was built (i.e., walls of stratum B). Early and later Roman coins were present in layer B. The later coins are of course the most relevant. We will discuss here only those whose stratigraphic context is clear from the information provided by the excavators and by A. Spijkerman, who was until his death responsible for the coins.

In trench 1, in the S part of the synagogue's hall, on top of the fill, a coin of 341-346 was found; in trench 17, in the NE part of the same hall, below the layer of the stylobate, a coin of Arcadius (395-408) was found; in trench 25 in the nave, c.0.75 m below the floor level, was a coin of Constantine. Dozens of other 4th-c. coins were found in the bedding mortar (layer C) that seals the fill, the latest being in trench 2 of the year 383. Numerous later coins were found in disturbed or surface layers but they are not considered here. In fill B there were also much earlier coins, such as 6 coins from Agrippa II to the 2nd/3rd c. in trench 1, a coin of 119-120 from trench 2, and a Hellenistic coin in trench 25 1.2 m below floor level.

<sup>14</sup> In the later reports Corbo frequently used a top to bottom counting of layers: stratum A represents the "White synagogue" (= the synagogue) while stratum C represents the early buildings underneath the synagogue of the Hellenistic, Roman and late Roman periods, covered by the fill, stratum B. See Corbo, *Studia Hierosolymitana* (supra n.8) 314.

<sup>15</sup> See the numismatic reports by Spijkerman (supra n.9). No final report on the coins of the later seasons has been published.

<sup>16</sup> See chiefly in Corbo, *Studia Hierosolymitana* 3 (supra n.9); S. Loffreda, "Ceramica ellenistico-romana nel sottosuolo della sinagoga di Cafarnaum," *ibid.* 273-312.

In the fill under the pavement of the courtyard were found the following: a coin of 341-346 in the SE corner of the courtyard in trench 4, 1 m below floor level, and a coin of 337-361 c.1.25 m below floor level. The latest coin from the courtyard, of 474, was found sealed in trench 23 under the pavement and its bedding; it probably arrived in the fill brought in to support the pavement.<sup>17</sup>

Under the pavement of the raised platform in front of the entrance (the main entrance into the synagogue and courtyard) and in the foundation levels of the stairway to that platform and street were found numerous 4th-c. coins, perhaps running up to 408.

I omit many thousands of coins found in hoards under the floor of the synagogue (mostly in the courtyard). They were deposited there during the use of the synagogue.<sup>18</sup>

As shown by Loffreda, the ceramic finds from the same trenches fit the numismatic picture. Still, pottery is not yet able to detect minor chronological differences and thus the numismatic evidence must take priority. There can be no doubt that the excavators were right in stating that the synagogue pavements, as well as the cement bedding and the upper fill that included many limestone chips from the pavers, date to the end of the 4th c. and in places even from the 5th c. But from stratum B, the thick layer of fill below the pavement, there are very few coins of the second half of the 4th c. From the fill under the whole of the synagogue proper, I count no more than 2 coins whose stratigraphic context is beyond doubt.

From the outset the excavators paid much attention to the thick basalt wall mentioned above. At first they presumed that the wall was simply a foundation, a part of the raised platform upon which the synagogue had been built. Later they discerned that the outer walls of the "white synagogue" do not follow precisely the orientation of the outer walls of the platform and that there is a slight discrepancy between the orientation of the walls of the upper synagogue and the rectangle of the basalt platform. In fact, the walls of the white synagogue are set upon the basalt walls and the dimensions of the two rectangles are almost identical. But because of the slight discrepancy and because in several places the "white" walls are not placed directly on the basalt walls but on an intervening layer (10-15 cm) of small stones, Corbo preferred to see them as two distinct phases, with the upper much later than the lower. In 1982 Corbo published his conclusion that the "lower building" (of basalt) is the early synagogue of the time of Christ, built for the Jews by the Roman centurion (Luke 7). In several places at the bottom of trenches in the synagogue's hall a hard beaten layer of rubble stones and earth ("massicciata") was found, that seemed to be connected to the basalt wall; in turn it covered residential buildings of the Hellenistic and early Roman period. It lay c.1.3-1.4 m below the floor of the "white synagogue".

The many historical and archaeological questions raised by Corbo's interpretation are not the subject of this article. Corbo himself pointed out some of the difficulties, including the fact that the early "basalt synagogue" has no known doors. Also instructive is the fact that at first sight the basalt wall seemed a true foundation for the white synagogue.<sup>19</sup> We need to

<sup>17</sup> Loffreda (supra n.9).

<sup>18</sup> Thus, a statement like "... this conclusion [for a fourth century date for the synagogue, and a fifth-century date for the courtyard] is based on a large number (more than 25000 of late Roman coins and the pottery finds)..." which is typical of the supporters of the later date of the Capernaum synagogue, creates the wrong impression. See also Loffreda, *New encyclopedia* vol.1 p.294.

<sup>19</sup> The discrepancy between the basalt foundation and the upper structure is very slight and in the opinion of the present author is not strong enough to overturn the excavators' earlier interpretation, that the basalt platform is indeed a podium for the upper structure. It is natural that the architect of the synagogue allowed himself to make some minimal corrections, as long as the limestone walls were resting their whole weight on the walls of the platform. Also, the fact that in a few places an interim layer of small basalt stones was placed between the larger basalt course and the lower



concentrate on the process of destruction or abandonment of the so-called basalt synagogue of the 1st c. and the stages of construction of the "white synagogue" above it in the 4th or 5th c.

As mentioned above, the basalt walls go down to the layer of the Hellenistic and early Roman insula, putting them out of use. In trench 14 in the W aisle of the synagogue, walls of a Hellenistic building that was cut by the basalt wall were found. In trench 15, W of trench 14 but outside the synagogue, the W part of the same Hellenistic building continued in use until the "later synagogue" was built above it.<sup>20</sup> The excavators did not explain what happened to the "first-century synagogue" when the "later synagogue" was built above it. Did it remain in use, or was it deserted or ruined, while the building abutting on the outside continued to function? Corbo emphasized that the earlier building had been dismantled to the level of the third course before construction on the new synagogue began. This third course was chosen by the builders of the new synagogue as the foundation level. According to Corbo, architectural decoration of the early synagogue was reused in other buildings. Indeed, several decorative stones, including an engraved menorah, were found in the vicinity of the synagogue, but no remains of the floor of the supposed early synagogue were discovered *in situ*. Yet, is it plausible that the builders of the new synagogue, who preserved the walls of the early building to the height of c.1 m, meticulously removed all traces of the earlier floor that would have rested on the hard *massiciata* (and parts of that layer itself) and of plaster on the walls? That would not have been necessary if they intended to leave the walls of the synagogue standing to a height of more than 1 m.

The dispersion of coins in the fill, according to their reports, is even harder to explain. How could it happen that all the coins which were found in the lower layers of fill B are of the earlier periods, not later than the 3rd c., while 4th-c. coins were found only in the upper part? Moreover, it is well known that coins of the 4th-5th c. are usually found in large quantities (much more than those of earlier periods).<sup>21</sup> The probability would be that 4th-5th c. coins would have been found also in the lower layers of the fill if the fill had been brought here by the builders of the "later synagogue", as they suggest. How can one explain the discovery in trench 21, in the W aisle of the synagogue, of the rubble and hard beaten earth layer sealing the Hellenistic and early Roman layer stratum A, followed above by an accumulation of "early and middle Roman" pottery, dated by Loffreda up to c.300? Can we explain this find as the result of an exceptional occurrence, namely that the builders of the later synagogue when they were packing the fill of the new synagogue happened to produce a concentration of pre-4th c. pottery within the fill? Or perhaps this may be evidence for an accumulation of material above the floor level of the earlier synagogue after its abandonment?

These are just some of the questions raised by the preliminary report on the later seasons. We hope that these problems, and the full reconstruction of the process of abandonment and rebuilding, will be treated in the final reports. At present the reader should remain sceptical of the excavators' conclusions.

limestone course is easily explained: the masons needed to level the upper face of the lower limestone course, and the only way to achieve such a leveling in the necessary places was by the adjustment of the level of the basalt platform by the addition of smaller basalt stones underneath the limestone ashlar.

<sup>20</sup> Corbo, *LibAnn* 34 (1984) 377-84.

<sup>21</sup> Compare, for example, the numismatic material found in the Hebrew University excavations at Bet She'an in 1988-89: of the 6706 identified coins, 99 coins were of the Roman period, 974 of the 4th c. (including Arcadius and Honorius), 2666 of the 5th c. (most of them *minimi*), 761 from the 6th c. to the Muslim conquest, etc. See J. Janai, "Numismatic material from the 1988/1989 seasons" in *ESI* 9, p.128. A similar pattern was discovered in the IAA excavations at the site: see R. Bar-Nathan and G. Mazor in *ESI* 11 (1990) 32. For coins from the 1990 season at Caesarea, see P. Lampinen in *Caesarea Papers* (JRA Suppl.5, Ann Arbor 1992) 167-72.

More reasonable is the first alternative suggested by the excavator, that the basalt building was not an independent earlier synagogue but simply the podium of the "white synagogue", the only one ever built on this site. Here too the chronology proposed is difficult to accept. According to Corbo, the synagogue was initiated by Julian (so not before 361). The same stratigraphic problems mentioned, relating to the distribution of coins in the fill, remain unexplained. In any case, there is no likelihood that in a fill, laid in the second half of the 4th c. or later, coins of the 1st-3rd c. will be found in the lower part while 4th-c. coins are found in the upper.

According to Corbo's reconstruction, the sequence of events was as follows:

1. The initiative for building the synagogue occurred with Julian;
2. The paving occurred not before the end of the 4th c., after the two pedestals (*bimot*?) were built on either side of the central door attached to the S wall;
3. The walls of the synagogue were plastered;
4. Benches were installed along the walls;
5. The platform in front of the entrance was built together with the synagogue;
6. The storeroom was built outside the hall in the NW;
7. The courtyard was the last to be built (the basalt foundation courses of the courtyard are more smoothly dressed and of better quality than those of the main synagogue). The pavement of the courtyard was completed not before 474.

The excavators state that the building program is unified although the process of building lasted some 110 years. How then could the entrance platform, which seems to be one unified construction in front of both the hall and the courtyard, and within the fill of which coins of the 4th and early 5th c. were found, be there if the courtyard did not yet exist? One cannot give a late date to the platform while it served as the only approach to the synagogue.

The more one looks at the structure and the finds, the more one is forced to conclude that the history of the synagogue is more complicated. The excavators' conclusion that the synagogue is a monolithic edifice built stage after stage at a modest pace without repairs, additions or modifications, is not plausible. The alternative interpretation is that the building is earlier than the mid 4th c. Then there were several repairs and repavings. The few coins found in the fill of the synagogue courtyard, and the larger number under the entrance platform, came in during repairs and renovations. The numerous 4th-early 5th c. coins found in the mortar bedding, the layer of fill and mason's chips below it entered during repairs of the whole or of parts of the pavement.

#### Architecture and decoration of the synagogues at Capernaum and Meroth and "Galilean synagogues"

Scholars who support an earlier date for Capernaum base their arguments chiefly on the architecture and art. They point to the resemblance between synagogue architectural decoration and that of Roman temples in the Galilee, the Hauran and southern Syria.<sup>22</sup> They tend to relate the style and technique to the 3rd c. Although the ornamentation of Capernaum, a rural site, is not to be compared to the art in large cities or even to lavish temples like Kedesh,<sup>23</sup> there is no doubt that the decoration of Capernaum does belong to the artistic milieu of the 3rd or, at least, early 4th c., rather than to the second half of the 4th c. or later.

<sup>22</sup> See in detail G. Foerster, *The Galilean synagogues and their relation to the Hellenistic and Roman art and architecture* (unpublished Ph.D. diss., Jerusalem 1972, in Hebrew).

<sup>23</sup> M. Fischer, A. Ovadia and I. Roll, "The Roman temple at Kedesh in Upper Galilee: a preliminary study," *Tel-Aviv* 11 (1984) 146-72.

I have discussed elsewhere the difference between the architectural background to the so-called "earlier type" from that of the later.<sup>24</sup> The first is "extrovert"; its outer façade is the most impressive part. The influence of pagan temple architecture is seen not only in the architectural details but in this focus on the exterior. The temple is the house of the god, and entrance was limited to priests and selected worshippers. Most stayed in the precinct in front, looking at the façade. The façade became the most impressive and ornate part. The function of the Galilean synagogue was completely different from that of pagan temples. Although a holy place (and sometimes regarded as a place where the divine presence [*sechina*] is found), the synagogue is not the house of God. The congregation of worshippers occurs within the building. In spite of the conceptual difference, however, the two are close architecturally. The outer façade oriented towards Jerusalem was the most lavish part of the Galilean synagogue. By such an interpretation we may understand the rather peculiar internal structure of the Galilean synagogue. Worshippers entered through the doors in the façade, then turned around towards that wall through which they had entered, since that was the direction of Jerusalem. Here, on one or both sides of the main entrance, the *bimot* (pedestals for the Ark) are located.<sup>25</sup> Only in the synagogues of the later type was this inconvenience solved in a simple manner: the entrance was shifted to the N door, so that worshippers entered the building facing Jerusalem from the first moment. The Torah shrine was placed in the S wall facing the worshippers as they entered. This solution is not the result of an evolution in synagogue architecture. It was introduced to the architecture of synagogues under the inspiration of Christian basilicas, in which the entrances were located in the W wall and worshippers looked towards the apse and altar from the moment of their entrance. This plan suited well the "introverted" nature of 5th-6th c. synagogues, in which the interior was more richly decorated than the outside. Such an arrangement, however, could not take place in the earlier Roman period, when the Jews did not diverge from the major principle of sacred architecture of the period.

In the later period both types of building co-existed. Most of the Galilean synagogues continued to exist, and some were rebuilt, until the end of the Byzantine period and even into the early Islamic period.<sup>26</sup>

The question still disputed is the chronology of the creation of synagogues of the "early type", and whether those buildings, of which Capernaum is most prominent, could be built from their foundations in the late 4th c. or later. Having already looked at stratigraphical considerations, I consider now aspects of style and quality of the masonry as a chronological criterion, in the light of the finds at Meroth.

The synagogue at Meroth was built, at least in part, in accord with the characteristics of the "early type". It is built of stone, with a façade with 3 openings oriented to Jerusalem. It is paved for the most part with stone slabs, and it has 2 *bimot* for the Ark on either side of the main door. Apparently here we find a strong argument in favour of the "regional" approach and in favour of a possible late chronology for the synagogue at Capernaum and some others in Galilee. Meroth is a building which belongs to the Galilean type, and all agree about its foundation in the 5th c. or, at the earliest, at the end of the 4th c.<sup>27</sup> Thus Z. Ilan wrote:

<sup>24</sup> Y. Tsafir, "On the architectural origins of the ancient Galilean synagogues: a reconsideration," *Cathedra* 20 (1981) 29-46 (in Hebrew); also id. (supra nn.4 and 7).

<sup>25</sup> Hachlili (supra n.3) 166-79.

<sup>26</sup> For the rebuilding of the synagogue at Nabratein in 564, see Avigad, "A dated lintel-inscription from the ancient synagogue of Nabratein," *L. M. Rabinowitz Fund for the exploration of ancient synagogues*, *Bulletin* 3 (1960) 49-56; E. M. Meyers, "Nabratein," in *New encyclopedia* 3, 1077-79 with bibliography. For the existence of the Capernaum synagogue up to Umayyad times, see Corbo, *Lib Ann* 33. For the existence of the Meroth synagogue in the early Islamic period, see Ilan and Damati (supra n.2).

<sup>27</sup> Ilan and Damati (supra n.2).

"According to the discoveries at Meroth, we are allowed to support the suggestion that the Galilean synagogue has a regional significance and not a chronological one. In other words, synagogues of such a type were created through a long period, between the third and the sixth century."<sup>28</sup>

A thorough investigation of the discoveries at Meroth shows that we cannot find in this synagogue what its excavators want to prove. The building at Meroth is built according to the principles of the "Galilean type". It follows the local tradition and represents well the principle of regionalism. But if we examine the architecture in detail, we find a remarkable difference in quality between Meroth and other Galilean synagogues such as Chorazin, Meron, Bar'am and Nabratein.<sup>29</sup> As mentioned above, these synagogues do not attain the high quality of masonry and stone-carving found in the main urban centers, or of the main Roman temples in Palestine. They are in villages and small towns whose inhabitants perhaps could not afford to hire the best artisans. Yet one cannot doubt the chronological relationship between the earlier synagogues and large cities of the 2nd to early 4th c.

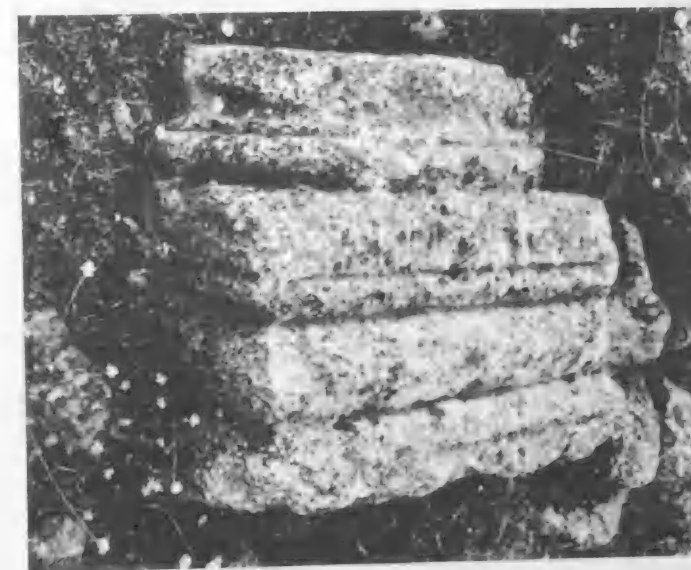


Fig.1. Qaşion, column base.

some believe that it was a pagan temple, while others, following Renan, consider it a synagogue. The latter refer to the dedicatory inscription found on the site. It mentions its erection to Septimius Severus, his wife Julia Domna and son Geta, "according to the vow of the Jews". But others point to the plan which does not resemble that of a synagogue. Only a full excavation may resolve the question of its purpose. But it is clear even from the few eroded remains visible that its masonry and stone-work are of the highest quality (fig.1). The high quality may be explained not only by the importance of a building dedicated to the emperors but also because of its relatively early date of 198. At that period Roman architecture in Palestine was at its peak. The splendour of the still-standing monumental building at Qaşion may have impressed the inhabitants of the nearby village. Thus they tried to imitate its stone-work, if not its plan. This interpretation must, of course, remain hypothetical, but even

<sup>28</sup> Ilan (supra n.2) 52 (= 236) (my translation). Compare also id. in *New encyclopedia* 1<sup>2</sup> 1029.

<sup>29</sup> For a dating of the capitals at Capernaum to the 3rd c. on artistic grounds, see M. Fischer, "The Corinthian capitals of the Capernaum synagogue: a revision," *Levant* 18 (1986) 131-42.

<sup>30</sup> E. Renan, *Mission de Phénicie* (Paris 1864) 773-77.

<sup>31</sup> Kohl and Watzinger (supra n.3) 209-11.

Although through its ground-plan the synagogue at Meroth is counted among the above-mentioned synagogues, the quality of stone-work is much inferior than in others. It is clear that the artisans at Meroth tried to reproduce a Galilean model with the same quality, but failed to reach the standards normally accepted in the Roman period. As a hypothesis we can point to a model and immediate source of inspiration for Meroth, namely the monumental building at Horvat Qaşion just to the north. At Qaşion the ruin of that building was surveyed by Renan<sup>30</sup> and then by Kohl and Watzinger.<sup>31</sup> It has not yet been excavated, but it is partially visible above ground. The function of the building is disputed:





Figs.2-3. Meroth, columns on pedestals.

without excavation it is easy to recognize the resemblance of the architectural sculpture of Qaṣion to that of the Galilean synagogues. This similarity convinced Kohl and Watzinger to include Qaṣion in the family of Galilean synagogues, and to use the date of its inscription as crucial evidence for dating the Galilean synagogues.

On the other hand, there is no room for comparison of the quality of execution of the two buildings. The stone carving at Meroth looks like an unsuccessful imitation of Qaṣion. The dressing is rough and inaccurate, the profiles are not straight, and the rounded bases of the columns on the pedestals sometimes look like squares with rounded edges (figs. 2-3).<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> In his review article (supra n.10) D. Chen commented on the Hebrew version of the present article, claiming that the crude column base shown (fig.2) belongs to the 7th-c. synagogue at Meroth and that the other better executed pedestals at Meroth must reveal a "late Roman" quality, similar to the "fifth century synagogue at Capernaum". It is clear from the description of the site by the excavators that no new pedestals were created in the 7th-c. restoration of the synagogue but there was reuse of an earlier material. Why should the restorers of the Meroth synagogue (already in decline) invest effort and money to carve new parts when they had ready parts from the ancient building (there were more columns in the ancient building than in the later one)? Chen himself points to pedestals embedded in the side walls of the later synagogue as building stones in secondary use.

Negligence or lack of budget seem too easy explanations: other parts of the synagogue, and above all the mosaics, prove that money and talent were invested. Instead, the tradition of high-quality dressing of stone no longer existed, and skilful masons and artisans could not be found locally. The builders tried to imitate the model of other nearby synagogues but lacked access to the necessary skills.

The conclusion seems to be clear: the Meroth synagogue continues the Galilean tradition but with inferior execution of the stone-work, although skilled mosaicists were present, at least in the second phase of the building. There was probably a considerable lapse of time between the earlier Galilean synagogues and Meroth. This conclusion relates above all to Capernaum, the most lavish and best executed (fig.3). Since Meroth is agreed to belong to the late 4th or 5th c., it seems that Capernaum is considerably earlier. This conclusion, reached already from the stratigraphic and numismatic evidence, is now supported by the comparison with Meroth.

Finally, regionalism remains an important criterion for studying the architecture of synagogues but it does not override chronological and stylistic considerations. Synagogues in the Galilee were built in the same manner also in the later period, but the formative group of the early type of Galilean synagogues were created and shaped during the 3rd and early 4th c.

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## New evidence for late-Roman and Byzantine Sepphoris

Ehud Netzer and Zeev Weiss

### Introduction (fig.1)

Whereas the Roman period at Sepphoris is covered by a number of historical sources, mainly Jewish, which provide considerable evidence for the city's appearance, population, and spiritual, social and economic life,<sup>1</sup> sources relating to the Byzantine town are less numerous and the Byzantine archaeological remains that were produced by the first five seasons of work<sup>2</sup> were also unimpressive, leading to the hypothesis that the earthquake of 363 had not only caused great damage but also led to a dwindling of the settlement. Building activity on the summit of the hill (acropolis) was found to have been meagre in the Byzantine period. The latest excavations, however, which have shifted to the shoulder east of the hill, have shown that Sepphoris not only continued to exist but was a thriving and elaborately decorated city.<sup>3</sup> They also show that, while Christianity brought a gradual change in the population, the Jewish community remained strong and may even have retained its preeminence. The meagre Byzantine remains found on the hill may therefore be due in part to their position just below the modern surface, where they have been subject to heavier disturbance and robbing. We still do not know exactly how the city recovered from the earthquake of 363,<sup>4</sup> but it is clear that the earthquake was quickly followed by a boom in construction and a second period of florescence. The present paper intends to give a brief account of some of the new archaeological evidence for this period of the city's history.

The layout of the Roman city centered around the hill and its slopes and extended onto the shoulder to the east. On top of the hill were found houses of a simple kind, many of them containing ritual baths. On the N slope of the hill was the theatre (fig.1 no.1). To its S has been found a large Roman house from a later period, that featured a mosaic floor with Dionysiac panels (fig.1 no.2). Down to the E side of the hill an orthogonal street grid was laid out centering on a colonnaded street running SW-NE. Various Roman structures, some of which contained ritual baths but the plans of which are not yet fully known, were laid out along this street.

### Features of the late-antique city

We now know that late-antique public buildings and private structures were integrated in a

- 1 A. Safrai, "The Jewish community in the Galilee and Golan in the third and fourth centuries," in Ch. Bras *et al.* (edd.), *The Land of Israel from the Second Temple to the Muslim Conquest* (Jerusalem 1982) 145-58 (Hebrew); Y. Neeman, *Sepphoris in the period of the Second Temple, the Mishnah and the Talmud* (Jerusalem 1993 [Hebrew]); S. S. Miller, *Studies in the history and tradition of Sepphoris* (Leiden 1984).
- 2 From 1985 to 1989 the Joint Expedition of the Hebrew University and Duke University, under the direction of E. Meyers, E. Netzer and C. L. Meyers, conducted excavations which have been summarized in the booklet by the same authors, *Sepphoris* (Winona Lake, Indiana 1992).
- 3 The excavations since 1990 reported on here have been conducted by a team from the Hebrew University led by E. Netzer and Z. Weiss. See also E. Netzer and Z. Weiss, "Sepphoris," *IEJ* 43 (1993) 190-96 and *id.*, *Zipori* (Jerusalem 1994).
- 4 S. P. Brock, "A letter attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem on the rebuilding of the Temple," *BSOAS* 40 (1977) 267-68; Y. Geiger, "The revolt in the time of Gallus and affair of building the Temple in the time of Julianus," in Ch. Bras *et al.* (supra n.1) 208-17.



Fig.2. Aerial view of the storehouse on the hilltop.



Fig.3. One of the *dolia* (pithoi) found *in situ* in the central hall of the storehouse.

regular manner into the existing street plan. The street plan continued in use in the Byzantine period but new buildings set on top of earlier Roman structures were added along several streets.

Just to the south of the hilltop has been found a storehouse (fig.2 no.3) which was undoubtedly one of the most important buildings on the Byzantine acropolis. It has a large central hall with smaller rooms on either side. Many *dolia* (large pithoi) containing traces of legumes were found on the floor of the main hall (fig.3). The room to the west was for storing liquids, while the room on the east was found to contain some jugs and a number of tools.

On the eastern edge of the acropolis only modest structures have been revealed so far, placed above the remains of the Roman house mentioned above. There are a number of structures here which belong to separate establishments. They contain



some water installations, including a stepped pool which probably served as a ritual bath. Other structures were found close to the theatre; one contained a colourful mosaic floor with geometrical design.

On the western side of the acropolis a narrow street flanked on both sides by rooms has been partially exposed. The buildings in this area bear no relationship to the plan of earlier structures on the site, and their dimensions and function need further examination, but it is clear that in this quarter the settlement was less intensive than in the preceding Roman phase.

The analysis of the archaeological finds around the acropolis suggests that private houses were built during the Byzantine period on the hill as well as on its slopes, as in the earlier period, but for the moment we cannot indicate the full extent of this building activity.

The Roman theater continued to exist at least until the 5th c., although the precise moment of its demise has not yet been established. Subsequently the theater served as a convenient quarry for stone, some of which was burnt in a nearby kiln in order to produce lime.

To the E of the hill the street grid continued to function in the Byzantine period. Some new buildings were constructed adjacent to the central colonnaded street and elsewhere. Others were built in a newly developed area which did not exist during the Roman period. Some of these buildings were excavated north of the major E-W street ('*decumanus*'), but we do not yet know their architectural plan or original use. The Roman bathhouse (fig.1 no.5) lying on the W side of the main colonnaded street continued to exist during the Byzantine period but a number of changes were made in the layout of its rooms. The 'Nile Festival' house (see below), lying opposite the bathhouse, was built in the early Byzantine period. Several structures were found to its east; they combined living quarters with rooms for industrial use, evidently for the processing of agricultural produce.

#### The 'Nile Festival' house (fig.4)

The house which has been called the "Nile Festival House" was constructed over houses of the Roman period which had been demolished and where in some places the area was cleared to bedrock to insert the new foundations. The new house measures c.50 x 35 m. It was somewhat irregularly planned without careful attention to symmetry, but its overall plan is close to an elongated rectangle with two wings, to east and west. The main entrance was on the side facing the colonnaded street on the west. On the sidewalk in front of this entrance a mosaic floor containing an 8-line inscription was laid. Two artists, Procopius and his son-in-law Patricius, are mentioned. We presume that they are the craftsmen who made the mosaics found in the building.

One entered first an open courtyard and proceeded by way of a number of corridors to the other parts of the building. A second entrance probably existed in the N side; that too led into an open courtyard, from which one could either enter the room with the Nile Festival mosaic or could pass through a small corridor to other parts of the building. The western wing of the house contained the Nile Festival room as well as other rooms decorated with geometric mosaics and a central hall with basilical plan.

The Nile Festival room (c. 7.6 x 6.2 m) contains a figural mosaic that covers the entire floor.<sup>5</sup> The scenes are connected with the Nile Festival and with hunting (fig.5). The mosaic carpet is surrounded by a frame that includes the following elements (working from the outside inwards). A band of stepped dentils and a band of guilloche at the outside is followed, across

<sup>5</sup> For a preliminary announcement and for discussion of the component parts of the floor, and parallels, see Netzer and Weiss, "Byzantine mosaics at Sepphoris: new finds," *Israel Museum Journal* 10 (1992) 75-80.



Fig.4. General view of the 'Nile festival' house, looking W.

the entire width at the top of the carpet, by a row of birds with a Greek inscription at the center. In the center of the floor the Nile flowing from the mouth of a hippopotamus separates the upper part from the hunting scenes below. Within the river Nile are depicted fauna and flora characteristic of the Nile's landscape. Above the river stands a nilometer (fig.6 in colour). Next to it a man stands on a kneeling female in order to engrave the numeral IZ on the nilometer with hammer and chisel. On each side of the nilometer is a seated figure. One is the personification of Egypt holding in her hand a cornucopia laden with fruit. The second figure represents the Nile deity, seated on an animal that has been largely destroyed. Two figures bearing gifts march toward the god of the Nile. Below the river is shown the city of Alexandria in the form of a gate between two towers, while next to it is the Pharos, the famous lighthouse. Two horsemen gallop toward the city, followed by another man. At the edge of this scene stands a monumental column topped by a colossal statue. The numeral IZ is marked twice, next to the riders and next to the column supporting the statue. The area to the right of the column and the lower part of the floor are devoted to various hunting scenes, including a lion devouring an ox, a bear devouring a boar, and leopard pouncing on a deer (fig.7 in colour). Some of the prey are shown in pairs, one being devoured, the other standing adjacent. An outlet for water, covered by a marble slab incorporated in turn into the mosaic floor, was found in the SE corner of this room. It suggests that the room was connected with some kind of water festivals (see below).



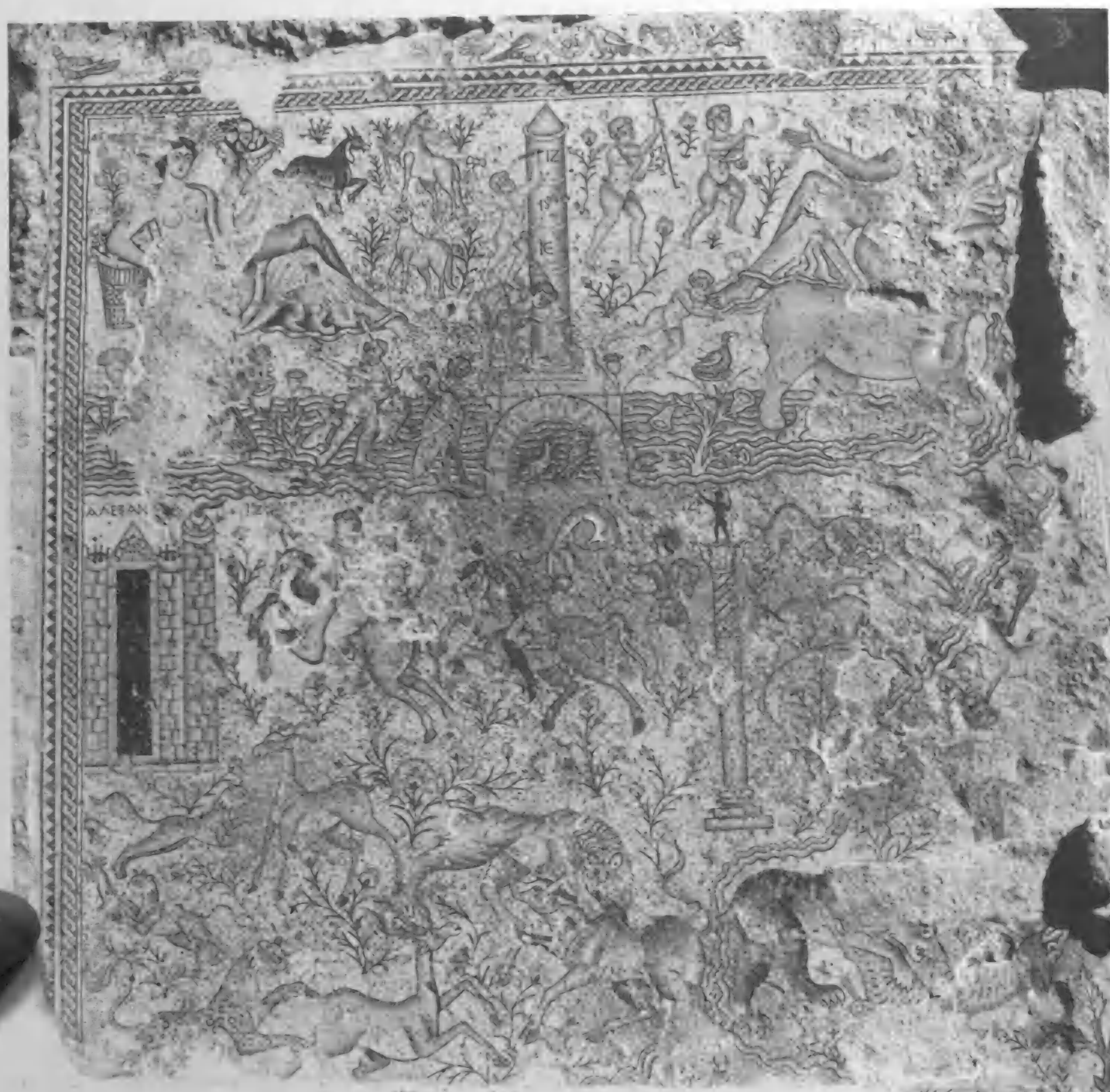


Fig.5. The Nile festival mosaic.

The walls of the central hall with basilical plan (c.13.5 x 10.5 m), like many others in the house, have been robbed, but the robber trenches point clearly to their location. The main entrance to this hall is also missing but its location is clear. Two coloured panels incorporated into the geometric mosaic floors, one to the east of the hall and the other on the E side of the hall proper, mark its position. The first panel, which has been partly destroyed, depicts two



Fig.8. Two Amazons hunting. The panel lies opposite the main entrance to the basilical hall in the middle of 'Nile festival' house.

almost naked hunters with a boar at their feet. On the second panel are two Amazons, mounted on horses and accompanied by a dog, who participate in the hunt of a leopard (fig.8). Behind them is a large structure with an arched gate and a column decorated with a capital on either side. A large part of the floor of the hall has been destroyed. Although the surviving parts have geometric designs, it is possible that an important figural panel was once placed at the center. Once again drainage channels were incorporated into the construction; they are found in the nave and N aisle, and seem to have played a part in water festivals held here.

In the system of corridors between the hall and the Nile Festival room was a panel depicting a centaur leaping on his hind legs and bearing in his hands a Greek inscription reading "God helps".

In the E wing was a courtyard with rooms opening onto three sides. The door on the W side of the courtyard led into a small corridor in front of the basilical hall. Most of the rooms had multicoloured geometric mosaics; three of them in the rooms north of the courtyard are intact (fig.9). The westernmost room contained an installation to drain water from the channel which evidently provided water for ceremonies held in the other two main rooms. The NE room contained a particularly striking mosaic, only partly preserved, with Amazons taking part in festivities of an unknown nature. In the lower part appear 3 dancing Amazons (fig.10); above them at the centre and seated beneath what seems to be a canopy is another Amazon (only





Fig.9. Geometric mosaic, 'Nile festival' house.

partly preserved). On both sides are horses moving towards the edges of the floor; their heads are turned to the side as they look back towards the seated Amazon, in whose honour the festivities seem to be held.

The central location of this building within the city, its artistic richness, its size and its many rooms, as well as the fact that it seems to lack some typical features of a private house, suggest to us that it should be a public building, perhaps some kind of basilica. A basilica is mentioned in Byzantine sources as a place where municipal meetings, discussions and lectures might be held.<sup>6</sup> Choricus mentions a basilica built in Gaza in the 6th c. for the benefit of the public.<sup>7</sup> Similar structures are known to have existed in other towns in Palestine.<sup>8</sup> An inscription mentioning the renovation of a basilica and evidently dating to the early 6th c. was found at Sepphoris in the late 1950s.<sup>9</sup> Avi-Yonah believed that it related to a church, but L. Di Segni has suggested a new reading which seems to refer to a municipal basilica rather than a church.<sup>10</sup> It is conceivable that the inscription refers to the building which we have excava-

<sup>6</sup> Mal., *Chron.* 338-39, 360 (ed. Dindorf).

<sup>7</sup> Choricus *Gaz.* (edd. R. Foerster and E. Richsteig) 3. 55.

<sup>8</sup> B. Lifshitz, "Inscriptions grecques de Césarée en Palestine," *RBibl* 68 (1961) 122-23.

<sup>9</sup> M. Avi Yonah, "A sixth-century inscription from Sepphoris," *IEJ* 11 (1961) 184-87.

<sup>10</sup> We are indebted to Leah Di Segni for allowing us to mention this point.



Fig.10. Three Amazons dancing, detail from easternmost room in the 'Nile festival' house.

ted, or to one similar to it. The drainage system found inside the house indicates that water was important and was poured over the floors, perhaps in connection with harvest festivals in which water naturally plays a key rôle.

#### Another late-antique building with mosaics

Another exceptional building paved with mosaics was uncovered at the intersection of two streets, east of the 'Nile festival' house (fig.11 in colour). This building was destroyed in the mid 4th c. but was soon rebuilt, its rooms once again paved with mosaics. Five rooms are paved with geometric mosaics while a sixth room, only partly preserved, contains a figured mosaic depicting a hunting scene not unlike those in the Nile Festival room. The design of its geometric frame, incorporating pomegranates, is identical to that of the Amazon room. The style of the mosaics and the similar patterns suggest that this building, evidently a private house, belongs to the same period as the Nile Festival house, being rebuilt in the 5th c.

#### The main streets

Additional changes took place during the course of the Byzantine period around the intersection of the two main colonnaded streets (fig.12). In the days of Bishop Eutropius the sidewalks were renovated and repaved with mosaics that featured geometric designs, and some changes were made to the entrances of the shops. Three Greek inscriptions blessing the work of



Fig. 12. Intersection of the main colonnaded streets ('cardo' and 'decumanus'), seen from the N.

Eutropius were incorporated into the mosaics each in a different location, one in the E stoa, another in the W, and the third in the S stoa of the 'decumanus'. The one affixed in the E stoa reads: "Under our most saintly father Eutropius the Episcopus, the whole work of the mosaic was done by the provision of the most learned Marianus, the chief physician and father of the city, in the time of the 14th indiction" (fig. 13). Since the year of the indiction is not mentioned, we cannot determine the date of the renovation, although it should belong to the late 5th or 6th c. It attests to the rôle of the bishop of Sepphoris not only in his religious capacity but as one active in the administration of the city, acting for the welfare of all its inhabitants.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Y. Dan, *Urban life in the Land of Israel at the end of ancient times* (Jerusalem 1987) 93-102 (Hebrew); C. Roueché, *Aphrodisias in late antiquity* (JRS Monograph 5, 1989) 75-79.



Fig. 13. Greek inscription mentioning Eutropius, incorporated into the E sidewalk of the 'cardo'.

#### Church

Foundations of a church were uncovered near the intersection of the two main streets. It was an elongated building oriented to the east (fig. 14). The central space was divided into a nave and two aisles. The apse was located on the east side, as is customary in such churches. Additional rooms, perhaps chapels, were added on the north and south. One may assume that the atrium and narthex are located to the west of the building (an area as yet unexcavated). Architecturally and stratigraphically this building relates to the improvements carried out in the nearby streets, and this causes us to attribute its construction to Eutropius.

#### The Jewish community and the new synagogue

The Jewish community, which seems to have remained in the majority even in late antiquity, built many synagogues that evidently were scattered throughout the town. The Talmud mentions that in the time of Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi there were 18 synagogues in Sepphoris (Jerusalem Talmud, Kela'im 9 4, 32a-b), and the names of some are known. Two inscriptions were found at the beginning of this century, one in Aramaic,<sup>12</sup> the other in Greek,<sup>13</sup> which

<sup>12</sup> Y. Naveh, *On mosaic and stone* (Jerusalem 1978) 51-52.





Fig.14. General view of the Byzantine church.

originally belonged to a 5th-c. synagogue that existed in the town. Fragments of a coloured mosaic containing a few letters and parts of words written in Aramaic were found out of context on the W side of the hill during excavations of the Joint Expedition.<sup>14</sup> Among the fragments one can identify the word *bar*, which also appears on the first inscription mentioned. These fragments seem to have come from the floor of a synagogue which was located nearby.

A synagogue was found very recently, located to the N not far from the city centre. It appears that the synagogue dates to the 6th century.<sup>15</sup> It was built adjacent to a street that runs parallel to and west of the 'cardo'. This elongated building faced away from Jerusalem, and its entrance was in its S wall. A narrow narthex separated the entrance from the hall of the synagogue. The main hall had only one aisle on its N side, thereby differing from most ancient synagogues.<sup>16</sup> A number of rooms were attached to the synagogue on the south but we have not yet identified their function (fig.15).

<sup>13</sup> L. Gerson, *The Greek inscriptions from synagogues in the Land of Israel* (Jerusalem 1987) 105-10 (Hebrew).

<sup>14</sup> Meyers *et al.* (supra n.2) 21.

<sup>15</sup> The dating is based upon the preliminary study of the archaeological finds and on the style of the main mosaic; a more precise date should be possible after the coins found in the bedding of the mosaic have been cleaned and studied.

<sup>16</sup> On the synagogues of Palestine see G. Foester, "The ancient synagogues of the Galilee," in L. I. Levine (ed.), *The Galilee in late antiquity* (New York 1992) 289-319; R. Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish art and archaeology in the Land of Israel* (Leiden 1988) 141-60. For a detailed study of the Byzantine synagogue's plan see G. Foerster, "A basilica plan (including apsis) as a chronological criterion in synagogues," in A. Kasher *et al.*, *Synagogues in antiquity* (Jerusalem 1987) 173-79 (Hebrew).

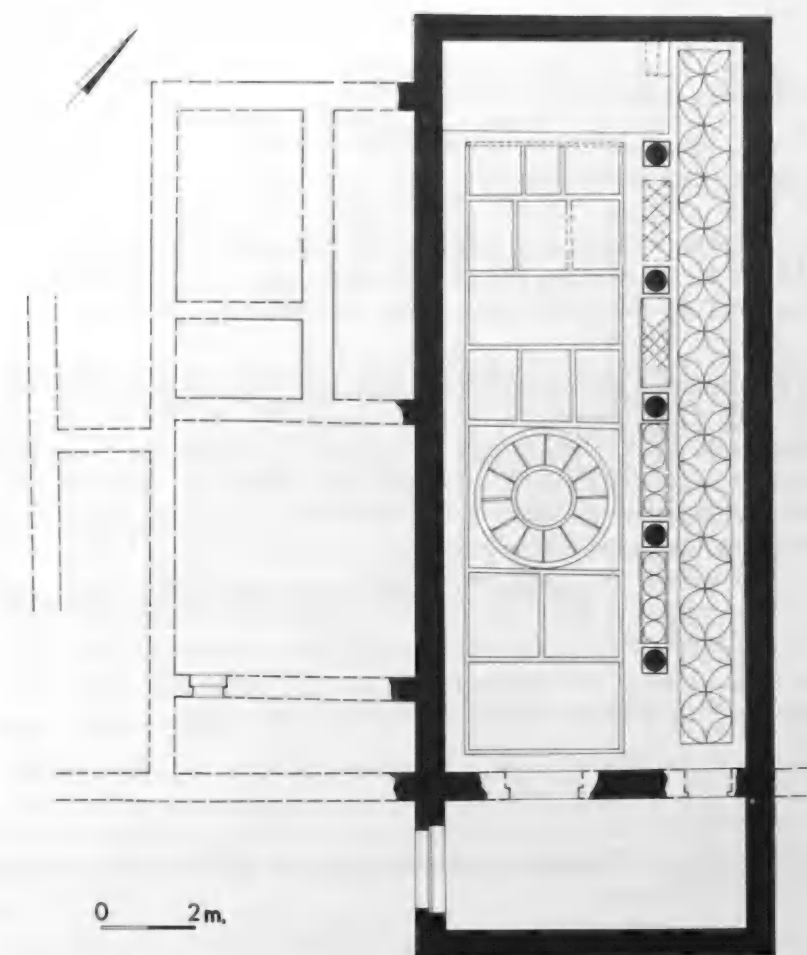


Fig.15. Plan of the synagogue.

The most important feature of the synagogue is its mosaic pavement. It was laid in a single long 'carpet'. The mosaic in the main hall has a figural design, whereas in the aisle it has geometric designs that encompass several Aramaic inscriptions. The carpet in the main hall is divided into strips, some of which have internal subdivisions. It contains rich and varied depictions. There is a zodiac and common Jewish symbols such as the Holy Ark with a seven-branched menorah on both sides of it, but we also find biblical scenes, including depictions of the tabernacle and the story of the binding of Isaac (only partly preserved). The various scenes comprising the main carpet all face in the same direction, towards the northwest; this follows the axis of the halls but runs in the opposite direction, towards the northwest; this follows the axis of the halls but runs in the opposite direction, towards the northwest; this follows the axis of the halls but runs in the opposite direction, towards the northwest.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately the whole of the NW part of the building has been destroyed, but some finds suggest that a *bema* was located at the end of the hall in front of the elaborate mosaic.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The nearby synagogues of Yaphia, Husifah and Hirbet Sumaqa are also oriented on an E-W axis and not towards Jerusalem. See E. L. Sukenik, "The ancient synagogue at Yafa near Nazareth," *Bulletin* 2 (1951) 23-24; N. Makhoul and M. Avi-Yonah, "A sixth-century synagogue at 'Isfiya," *QDAP* 3 (1934) 118-31; S. Dar, "The synagogue at Hirbet-Sumaqa on Mt Carmel," *Synagogues in antiquity* (supra n.16) 213-30 (Hebrew). On the orientation of synagogues with relation to Christian buildings, see A. Seger in *Ancient synagogues in Israel* (BAR S499, 1989) 86-87, and J. Wilkinson, *PEQ* 116 (1984) 16-30.

<sup>18</sup> On the development of the *bema* and its use in ancient synagogues, see Z. Weiss, "The location of the Sheliah Tzibbur during prayer," *Cathedra* 55 (1990) 8-21 (Hebrew); L. I. Levine, "From

### Evidence for fire and destruction of Byzantine buildings

Many of the late-antique building at Sepphoris show traces of conflagration. The two stoas flanking the colonnaded main street were destroyed by a fire. The burned wooden roofs and the tiles that covered them collapsed onto the floors of the stoas. Signs of fire are also clear on some of the mosaic floors in the house in the SE insula; one could still see the mark left by charred wooden beams on the tesserae. The storehouse on top of the hill was destroyed by a fire that seems to have affected chiefly the central hall containing the *dolia* as well as the hall to its east.

It would seem that towards the end of the Byzantine period many buildings in the city were damaged or destroyed. This catastrophe may be linked with the Persian or Arab conquest, although one cannot rule out the possibility that they were the result of an earthquake, the date of which remains to be determined. It is clear that during the Arab period the physical appearance of the city deteriorated. This is evident from the robbing of stone and from the later constructions placed on top of earlier remains.

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### Note

The present article is an updated and expanded version of a paper that appeared in Hebrew in *Michmanin*, the Bulletin of the Art Museum of the University of Haifa, 1995.

community center to 'Lesser Sanctuary': the furnishings and interior of the ancient synagogue," *Cathedra* 60 (1991) 70-74 (Hebrew).

## A lamp mould from Sepphoris and the location of workshops for lamp and common pottery manufacture in northern Palestine

David Adan-Bayewitz

### The Sepphoris mould

This mould for forming the upper half of a lamp (fig.1), found at Sepphoris (Diocaesarea) in the Galilee (fig. 2),<sup>1</sup> was shaped from a small block of soft limestone rounded roughly on the bottom and flattened at the top. Missing are one rear quadrant of the mould, including the area of the lamp handle, and the outer part of the other rear shoulder.

The rounded shape of the body and nozzle, and the filling hole with its surrounding rings, were probably outlined with a compass, using the central hole of the mould as midpoint. The linear decoration on the shoulders and nozzle was apparently incised freehand with a sharp instrument. The filling hole, moulded as a flat disc with a raised dot in the center, was probably pierced, and the wick hole was presumably cut out of the nozzle, prior to firing.

### The lamp made from this mould

The lamp made from this mould (henceforth: the Sepphoris lamp, see fig.1, right) has a round body, and a short spatulated nozzle; decoration is linear, in relief. The large filling hole is surrounded by a raised ring and two concentric lines. Curved lines, parallel to the sides of the nozzle, appear on its either side. The shoulders are decorated with alternating pairs of nested V's and truncated ovals.

The Sepphoris lamp resembles closely in form, and in some of its relief decoration (parallel curved lines on either side of the nozzle, nested, truncated ovals on the shoulder, and a raised ring and concentric line around the filling hole), a lamp recovered from catacomb 17 at Beth She'arim.<sup>2</sup> This lamp has a vertical, triangular handle and is described as having a flattened base. A guilloche pattern decorates the shoulders on either side. A similar lamp, found in catacomb 24 at Beth She'arim, is classified as lamp type 55 by J. Elgavish.<sup>3</sup> A shoulder frag-

<sup>1</sup> The mould was found in 1983 or 1984 during a school excursion to Sepphoris, "in a pile of stones about 400-500 m. east of the 'citadel', about midway between the 'citadel' and the underground reservoir, near the path leading to the reservoir." The pupil who found it gave the mould to A. 'Assaf, Director of the Kibbutz Ma'yan Barukh Regional Museum, who accompanied the excursion. My thanks to A. 'Assaf for the above description of the circumstances of the find, and for permission to publish the lamp mould, and to M. 'Aviam, District Archaeologist of Western Galilee, for calling it to my attention. The lamp mould is in the collection of the Ma'yan Barukh Museum.

Two additional stone lamp-moulds from Sepphoris, recovered in 1986 from a fill near the theater by the Joint Sepphoris Expedition, have been reported. A photograph of one of these moulds, for making the upper part of a lamp generally similar in form to that discussed here, has been published. See E. Meyers, E. Netzer, and C. Meyers, "Sepphoris [Sippori], 1986 — Joint Sepphoris Project," *IEJ* 37 (1987) p. 277, pl. 35B. Z. Weiss has informed me that a third lamp mould, made of clay, has been found in the Sepphoris excavations. My thanks to him for this information and for permission to mention it here.

<sup>2</sup> N. Avigad, *Beth She'arim 3, Report on the excavations during 1953-1958, Catacombs 12-23* (Jerusalem 1976) pp. 74, 190, pl. 71.32.

<sup>3</sup> A photograph of the lamp appears in J. Elgavish, *The art of lamps in Israel in the Roman and Byzantine periods* (Diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem 1962, in Hebrew) p. 214, type 55. Avigad (*supra* n.2), describing the above-mentioned lamp from catacomb 17, notes a similar lamp from



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## The Near Eastern countryside in late antiquity: a review article

Clive Foss

The three works considered here reflect the latest research in a field which has already commanded considerable attention. They deal with villages or small towns at opposite ends of the Levant — northern Syria and southern Israel — and share a common basis in archaeology, but each employs its own methodology. Each will be considered in the context of earlier research, from the first reports to the most recent studies. I shall pay particular attention to the general questions which the sites raise — notably their function in the local and regional economy, and their ultimate disappearance — and consider the changing approach to such problems. The first volume, which analyses villages and attempts to reconstruct an entire society, is a model of its kind which will surely be the foundation for all future research; the second is a useful but rather old-fashioned summary, discussing sites and buildings as individual entities, with hardly any attempt at integration; the third, which treats rural settlements outside towns, offers a novel theory of extremely dubious value.

### Northern Syria

The barren limestone hills of northern Syria, between Antioch and Aleppo and stretching as far south as Apamea — an area of about 40 x 70 miles contain one of the most spectacular landscapes of the ancient world. The rugged slopes and valleys are covered with the remains of some 700 villages, many of them almost perfectly preserved. They are built in a finely cut and decorated limestone masonry, with elegant-looking houses, sometimes magnificent churches, apparently public buildings, and usually surrounded with olive presses (color figs. 1-2). All this in a region virtually deserted now and, it would seem, from the time the builders of this society last moved out.

The sheer quantity of the buildings, the quality of the masonry, and the abundance of information from inscriptions have naturally attracted many attempts to explain how such a rich rural society could develop in such an unlikely place, how it survived, and what happened to it. Explanations have naturally varied with the time and attitudes of the observers, among whom the author of the volume reviewed here offers a radically different but surely definitive new interpretation. His work is best considered against the background of the earlier studies which deal with the villages, and especially the domestic architecture, of this region.

The first scholar to make this district known to a western public was Melchior, Comte de Vogüé (1829-1912), who travelled in Syria and Palestine in 1861 and was later French ambassador to Constantinople and member of the Academy. His researches produced two folio volumes, *Syrie centrale, architecture civile et religieuse du Ier au VIIe siècle* (Paris 1865-1877). They consist essentially of a series of engraved plates, mostly of temples, churches, and architectural decoration, with frequent plans and scenic views. Each plate is accompanied by a commentary and the whole has a brief general introduction.

The Count, first of many to be impressed by the sheer elegance of the stonework and carving, saw the domestic remains as the large and comfortable dwellings of a rural aristocracy. Since the houses of this region normally have numerous rooms arranged on two storeys with a large open veranda overlooking a courtyard, such a supposition was natural. The plates show large and comfortable houses with formal gardens and orchards, and people strolling in the open courts (fig.3). The whole looks peaceful, prosperous, and very classical, despite the late date.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The inscriptions which show that many of the buildings were of a Christian period were read by De

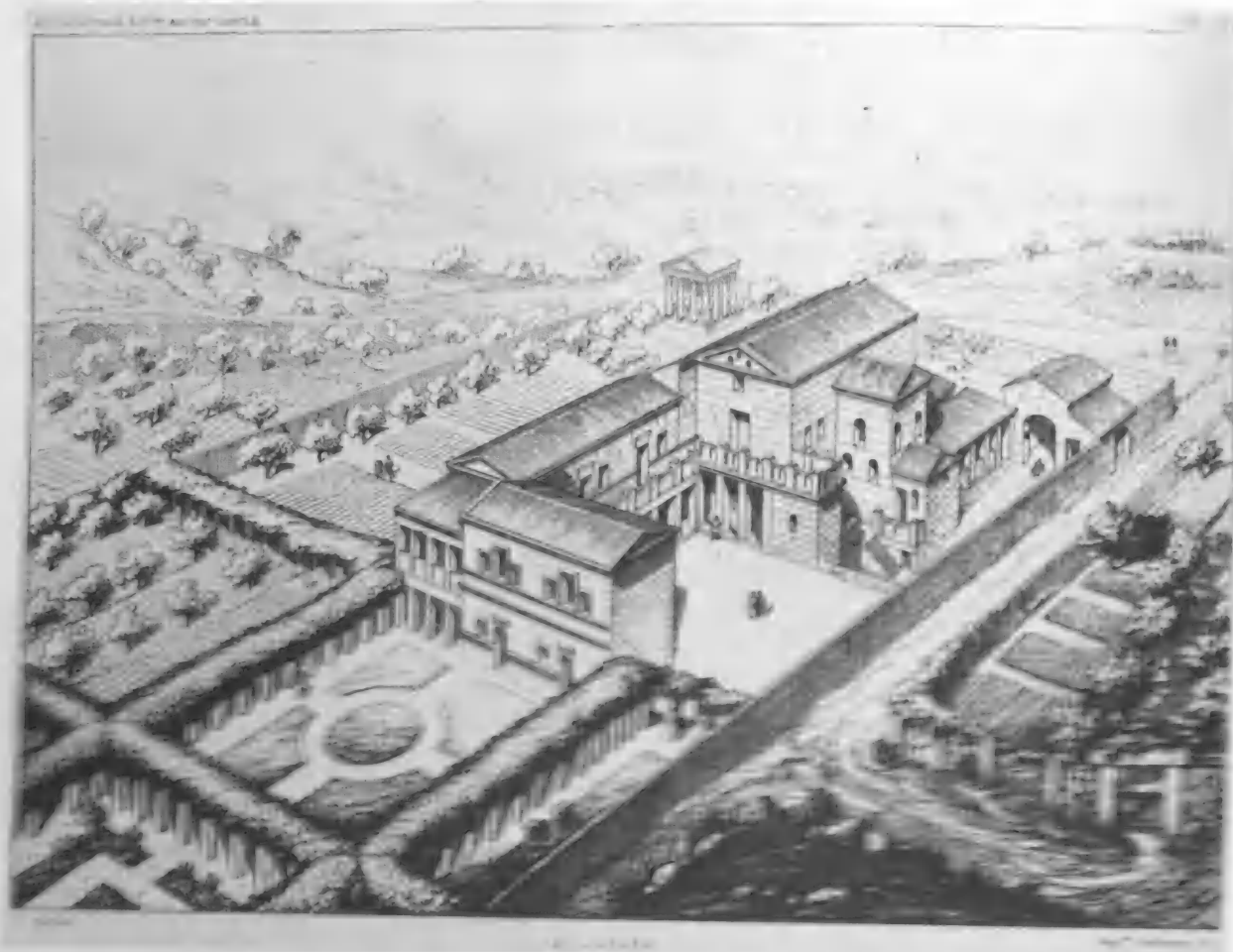


Fig. 3. Rural elegance: 'estate' at el-Barah, as restored by de Vogüé.

In his introduction, de Vogüé describes the unity of this totally unknown civilization, where the settlements are joined by style, organization and period; a Christian society, not timid, hidden and suffering as so often portrayed, but living "une vie large, opulente, artistique, dans de grandes maisons bâties en grosses pierres de taille, parfaitement aménagées, avec galeries et balcons couverts, beaux jardins plantés de vignes, pressoirs pour faire le vin, caves et tonneaux de pierre pour le conserver, larges cuisines souterraines, écuries pour les chevaux — belles places bordées de portiques, bains élégants, — magnifiques églises..." (71.) In other words, an aristocratic society of considerable taste for the art and for living must have built such structures; a society of a kind never met elsewhere in the Near Eastern countryside of the mid-4th c.

The discovery of such a society naturally raises questions about its fate. The remains, unfortunately of the Roman and Christian periods, seemed to provide the answer that everything was abandoned suddenly at the time of the Arab invasions, and that Islam, hostile to such a culture, caused its irretrievable loss. "L'islamisme, en tant que religion, nous apparaît comme un fait qui a été le résultat de la révolution intellectuelle et morale et politique que nous avons vu se développer" (101). De Vogüé's conception of a rich and elegant society which succumbed to the coming of Islam was destined to have a long influence.

Vogüé's collaborator and fellow-traveller, the epigraphist William Henry Waddington (1825-1894), author of numerous epigraphical and numismatic works still of importance, Minister of Education, then of Foreign Affairs, later ambassador to Great Britain. De Vogüé was particularly interested in the continuity of the Greek tradition, and the influence of Syrian architecture on mediaeval France after the Crusades.

The basis for scientific knowledge of the region was laid by the expeditions of Howard Crosby Butler (1872-1922, professor of art and architecture at Princeton, later excavator of Sardis) in 1899-1900, 1904-5 and 1909. They resulted in two series of folio volumes: the *Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria*<sup>2</sup> and *Syria, Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria*.<sup>3</sup> They survey a much larger region than that covered by de Vogüé, systematically studying the monuments village by village. The documentation is enormous and still fundamental: the volumes contain discussions, photographs, plans, and restorations of a vast range of buildings, public and private. Nothing is neglected, though churches and fortifications, more substantial, better decorated and more often inscribed, are generally treated in greater detail than the domestic architecture.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, there are numerous plans and illustrations of houses, villas, and occasionally of entire villages.

Although Butler's interests were primarily in architecture and decoration, he paid careful attention to the broad historical questions which the remains naturally raise. He was especially struck by the barrenness of the landscape of his time, in seeming contrast to its ancient prosperity and dense inhabitation. He supposed, therefore, that the environment had changed, that the country had once supported forests and more extensive vegetation, but that deforestation had led to its decline. This came in the 7th c., as a result of the destructive Persian invasions, then the settlement of the Arabs, who had left virtually no trace in the region (AAAS II. 7-10). In the more detailed regional studies, the *Princeton Expeditions*, he noted that some districts, especially in the north, had houses crowded along streets, with shops, bazaars, gardens, and many traces of olive and grape production which could help explain the extraordinary wealth manifested by the remains. In the south, though, there were several settlements which seemed to consist largely of substantial villas, for which he found no analogue: they were not the great Roman estates found in western Europe, nor comparable to mediaeval castles, but seemed to be the dwellings of a prosperous middle class who lived in considerable security. Throughout, he noted the general absence of public buildings beside churches, shops, occasional inns, a few structures for public meetings, and extremely rare public baths.

Butler's general analysis of these sites was not fundamentally different from that of Count de Vogüé: "All the evidence of the ruins reflects the life of a population of wealth and refinement. The extensive dwellings, with their beautiful carved ornament, their spacious well-lighted and well-ventilated apartments; the public baths, with their rich mosaic pavements; the great mausoleums, abounding with exterior carvings and fitted with receptacles for the dead, are all proof of the high degree of civilization that had been attained by the people who made and used them" (AAAS II. 14). The quantity and elegance of the remains led inevitably to the conclusion that they were the products of a highly sophisticated society. It only remained to explain how that society worked, how the householders generated such prosperity — and to understand the phenomena both in their own terms and in the context of the outside world. Butler, who accomplished an enormous task in recording the monuments (his work remains fundamental to any study of this and the neighboring regions), could only touch on such subjects.

<sup>2</sup> Four volumes, New York 1903-1930. For the present subject, see Part II, H. C. Butler, *Architecture and other arts* (New York 1903) 3-29.

<sup>3</sup> The four volumes (Leyden 1907-1949, often bound in several fascicules) are arranged in a complex and inconvenient fashion; those relevant to the present subject are IIB, *Architecture, Northern Syria* by Butler (Leyden 1920), especially parts 3-6; IIIB, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions, Northern Syria* by W. K. Prentice (1922), and IVB and IVD, *Syriac and Arabic Inscriptions* by E. Littmann (1934, 1949).

<sup>4</sup> Butler also produced a separate study of the churches, based on the material presented in the other volumes: *Early Churches in Syria* (Princeton 1929).



It remained for Georges Tchalenko (1905-87) to produce a comprehensive synthesis of remains, texts, and history — especially social and economic history — which appeared to be the last word on the subject. His work, in three volumes, *Villages antiques de la Syrie du nord* (Paris 1953-58),<sup>5</sup> seemed to offer a complete explanation for all the questions that had been raised, and to remove these remains from the realm of mystery or speculation.

Tchalenko's work was based on meticulous surveys of the sites as well as a solid knowledge of the historical texts<sup>6</sup> and a real understanding of the environment. His first volume therefore contains a long discussion of history and geography, a survey of characteristic sites by region, and the general synthesis for which the book was justly praised. The second volume contains maps, plans, restorations and photographs, with a valuable series of 38 plans of sites with brief commentary; the third includes historical texts, classified lists, chronological tables, and a helpful series of analytical indexes. Nothing like this had ever been undertaken for this region, or for any other part of the late antique world.

The most important section was the general synthesis, 'une civilisation rurale' (vol. I, 373-438). Tchalenko drew on his vast knowledge to classify the sites so that they could be understood in social and economic terms. There were primitive settlements; peasant villages; village groups; *agrorural* settlements; villages developed from a single estate; villages of small farmers; small estates; towns; villas; industrial and commercial centers; and imperial estates — in other words, a great variety of settlements. He discussed the ownership of land by individuals, usually on a small scale, the state and the church, and traced the historical development of the villages. He then turned to the basic questions, proposing answers for all of them: *What was the life like in the first or sixth c. AD? Who were the people who lived here? How did they live? What was the source of their wealth? and What happened to them?*

Tchalenko discussed the different elements of the population, from slaves to great landowners, and changing forms of land ownership. He saw a continuing break-up of large estates, especially in the time of Justinian, and growth of free peasant holders. The population was entirely agricultural, and evidently large and prosperous, but why? The answer lay in the widespread cultivation of a profitable cash crop, the olive. Mixed farming, with grain and orchards, yielded more and more to an economy based almost exclusively on the production of olive oil, a 'monoculture'. Since remains of olive presses surround many of the villages, and olive trees will grow in this terrain, perhaps better than most other crops, the answer seemed very satisfactory. The peasants grew olives, the oil was pressed locally, then taken to the small market towns where sale and transport were organized. These places would have had a population of artisans and traders as well as farmers. They sold the oil to the great neighboring cities like Antioch, and perhaps even abroad. The production generated a high profit which was then invested in the remarkable range of buildings. At harvest-time (October-November), the whole mountain would have been crowded with itinerant agricultural workers — for the crop demanded more labor than could be raised locally — people involved in packaging and transport, and peasants going to market to lay in provisions for the winter. The presence of so many people explained the construction of churches which seemed far too large for the needs of the villages (I, 373).

This rural society flourished through the 6th c. Despite the destruction of Antioch by earthquake, fire, and enemy attack, and the Persian invasions which ruined Apamea and other

cities, the hill region continued to prosper, quite possibly by taking on an independent economic life of its own, shipping its oil directly to the Mediterranean for export. Nevertheless, the sites were eventually deserted. Tchalenko dismissed any theory of environmental change, such as advanced by Butler: no deforestation because there never had been any forests, and no soil exhaustion because the population was increasing into the 6th c. The end came not from a gradual natural phenomenon, but a sudden catastrophe. The inscriptions gave a clue: they stop brusquely in 610, and never resume. It was natural, therefore, to associate the end of this society with the great Persian war of 602-30 which brought extensive devastation and a long Persian occupation. Change came not because the Persians oppressed or massacred the locals, but because the occupation cut off their lifeblood, the trade to the west. The farmers were ruined. Gradually, under Arab occupation, when access to the west remained closed, they moved away and the region was deserted, except for a few isolated pockets of population.

Here, then, was a broad explanation such as had never before been attempted. The work was so comprehensive, embracing the monuments in the totality of their context that it was described as leaving social and economic history behind, to represent a new phenomenon, 'l'histoire totale'.<sup>7</sup> Curiously, though, it seemed to have far less influence than it deserved, since its conclusions were rarely if ever integrated into the general history of the region, perhaps because the historians who dealt with such questions were unwilling or unable to assess the value of a theory based so heavily on archaeological material.

The work of Tchalenko depended entirely on surveys and texts; so far, not a single site of the region had been excavated. The French Institute of Near Eastern Archaeology (IFAPO, based then in Beyrouth, now Damascus), which had commissioned Tchalenko in the first place, therefore decided to undertake a trial excavation. They chose Dêhès, a village near the centre of the region, which seemed in every way typical. It had already been the subject of a separate study by Tchalenko, who noted the presence of large villas and commercial buildings. A series of *sondages* was carried out under the leadership of Jean-Pierre Sodini and Georges Tate in 1976-78, and the results expeditiously published in 1980. The report, which is a long and comprehensive model of its kind, brought an entirely new perspective to the study of the region, and forced a fundamental reappraisal of the theories of Tchalenko.<sup>8</sup>

The excavations focussed on the centre of the village, identified by Tchalenko as a special district with a group of commercial buildings (called an *agora*) and an *andron* or village meeting-hall. The archaeologists found none of this, but determined conclusively that all the buildings were simply houses (fig. 4). Furthermore, no matter how fine their stonework and elegant their balconies, they were the houses of peasants who kept their livestock on the ground floor and in the courtyards, and built their houses close together in no regular plan, on narrow passages, not streets, and on lots of varying size. The discovery of numerous troughs made it clear that stock-raising was an important part of the local economy, as was the production of grain, stored on the lower floors. There was nothing to support a theory of monoculture of the olive.

Study of the remains, pottery and coins (all reported in exemplary detail) revealed an historical development far different from what had long been postulated. Although there was indeed no new construction after the 6th c., the village was not simply abandoned then but continued to be occupied into the 9th or even 10th c. The later stages, though, were increasingly squalid: rubbish would accumulate on floors, then a new rough pavement be laid; roofs would

<sup>5</sup> Supplemented by volumes devoted specifically to the churches: *Églises de village de la Syrie du nord* (two folio volumes, one of plans and drawings, one of plates: Paris 1979-80) and *Églises syriennes à bema* (Paris 1990).

<sup>6</sup> The Greek inscriptions were edited by Henri Seyrig, director of the French Institute in Beyrouth, who also prepared the excellent analytic indexes; the Syriac by Enno Littmann (who had been epigraphist for the Butler expeditions), and the Arabic by Janine Sourdel-Thomine.

<sup>7</sup> See the long review (mostly a verbose summary and appreciation) by M. Rodinson in *Syria* 38 (1961) 170-200.

<sup>8</sup> J.-P. Sodini *et al.*, 'Dêhès (Syrie du nord), Campagnes I-III (1976-78): recherches sur l'habitat rural,' *Syria* 57 (1980) 1-304.

collapse, then be propped up; balconies were divided to provide new rooms. The evidence of the coins suggests that much of this change took place in the mid-7th c. and later.

It appeared, then, from this limited excavation, that most of Tchalenko's grand theories, like those of his predecessors, would simply have to be abandoned or at last drastically revised. It remained for the work under consideration here to lay the foundation for a completely new approach, and to offer revolutionary and convincing solutions for the questions long posed.

GEORGES TATE, *LES CAMPAGNES DE LA SYRIE DU NORD I* (Institut français d'archéologie du proche-orient, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, vol. 133, Geuthner, Paris 1992). 356 pp. with 284 figures, 56 tables and 19 graphs.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this book, both for its own subject and region, and for its implications about the society and economy of the Roman, late antique and early Islamic Near East. Professor Tate has employed the most modern, conscientious methodology to analyze a vast body of material and to extract from it conclusions of an extremely far-reaching nature. The work will stand as a monument in its own right, and serve as the base for all future studies. The villages of Syria will never look the same again.

The core of the work consists of a study of 46 well-preserved villages scattered through all the regions of Northern Syria. They contain some 4700 rooms, the unit on which this work is based since it enables the development of the buildings and sites to be followed more closely, and offers a quantity of information sufficient for highly sophisticated analysis.

The author goes directly to the point: 95% of the buildings in these villages are houses, and these of one single type. They all have two storeys, the upper for living, the lower for economic activity, essentially stock-raising and agriculture. Animals — sheep, cattle, poultry — occupied the courts and were fed in the ground floor. The universal open balconies enabled the proprietors to survey their animals without having to mix with them. In other words a purely rural life: no formal gardens, no calm strolling in the open courtyards (which were thus totally different from the reception and recreational courts of grand urban villas), no peaceful contemplation of vistas from the verandas, but the constant presence of animals and, it would seem, a great many people. The people liked their privacy: the houses were closed to the outside, approached only through their courts. They continued to build houses of the same kind for 500 years (pp.1-64).

Other buildings occupied little of the village space. Churches (not studied here) were, of course, important, as were tombs and olive presses. The latter appear in the houses and in buildings at the edge of the villages. Strictly speaking, it is not possible to tell whether they were olive- or grape-presses, since both products are known for this region (51-55). Public buildings, despite the long tradition of identifying them, were virtually non-existent. Baths are extremely rare, appearing only in a few larger villages or towns; 'Androns' also are few and far between, their actual function uncertain. Buildings considered inns, bazaars or shops almost inevitably turn out to be houses (65-84). In other words, instead of numerous specialized activities, these villages reveal almost nothing but peasant farming. A new reality replaces the colorful variety long supposed.

In order to analyze these buildings in an historical context, it is first necessary to establish a means of dating them. The combination of dated inscriptions, masonry types, and decoration provides criteria for dating the buildings without inscriptions — the great majority. By using all possible kinds of information, and by putting much of his material through the computer, Tate concludes that the whole district experienced periods of growth interrupted by stagnation or decline: fairly continuous growth from the 1st through the mid-3rd c.; a substantial drop around 250; constant growth from 270 to 550, increasing after 320, much more vigorous from 410 to

480, and reaching the greatest activity between 450 and 480; reduced growth from 480 to 550; then a much different period with the construction of very few houses but several churches until 610. The pattern is basically the same throughout the region, with some local variation (pp.85-188, by far the most complicated part of the book).

These calculations use the number of rooms, not houses, in the district as their base. This is a more useful criterion, since it enables the expansion of houses as well as villages to be traced. Of course, as the author well realises, this involves counting structures, not people, and only shows growth not decline (since houses are not torn down when fewer people live in them), so that demographic cycles of stagnation or decline might not be apparent. Nevertheless, the addition of rooms to houses and houses to villages may be taken to show that the population was increasing through the period.

The next section, 'une civilisation agraire' (a title that reflects and invites comparison with Tchalenko's summary chapter), presents the countryside and its economy (pp.189-271). Basically, the whole hill-country was occupied by villages, most of which are preserved. They were surrounded by fields, among which it is possible to distinguish pasture from cropland. The heavy red soil is hard to cultivate but good for growing trees; the rainfall is adequate. On the whole, the region is marginal, suitable for occupation at a time when the neighboring plains are already occupied (thus settlement here implies that the plains were well populated). It is relatively inaccessible, reached only by tracks, not roads; but, unlike the nearby mountains, not well suited to being a refuge area. In other words, occupation of the region is most appropriate to a time of relative security.

The area surveyed contains 122 villages, built as closely together as conditions would allow. In the more densely occupied northern region, the average village, with about two square kilometers of territory, was very small; Dêhès is one of the largest. In the southern district, closer to Apamea, the villages are larger, with an average territory of 7 km<sup>2</sup>.

The villages were not fortified, but many had their houses closely set, with the outer walls forming an effective barrier against thieves and wild animals; the villages were thus closed in on themselves, like the houses. There was no regular planning: narrow passages, not streets, separated the houses. An occasional appearance of planning comes only from a tendency to build houses to face the sun. Villages often contained empty spaces, perhaps used for communal or commercial activity, but no regular market-places can be identified. The stony fields around the villages were cleared, the stones set in piles, walls or terraces. These served to mark fields, while the territories of villages were often defined by boundary stones. There was no irrigation; the houses stored water in cisterns; when these appear in the fields, they are for watering animals, not irrigation. Simplicity and spontaneity are the rule throughout: the forms of houses are consistent, the division of land apparently natural and unplanned.

The olive played a dominant rôle in the local economy. In 45 villages, there are 245 olive presses (so far discovered, many more probably lie buried); only 6 are without them. Grapes were probably next in importance; wheat, beans, vegetables, and fruit trees were also significant. The remains reveal (for the first time) the importance of stock-raising: troughs appear in 500 of the rooms surveyed. They were probably for sheep and cattle which provided wool and meat, quite possibly for sale to the cities. In addition, construction, carried out by builders who were peasants like the others, was always important; the 45 villages contain some 2000 houses with an average of more than 3 rooms each, most of them built over 300 years. All, of course, were of solid stone, with increasingly fine carved decoration.

The remains suggest that trade was far different from what Tchalenko imagined. Most pottery is simple and apparently of local manufacture, coins are largely local and not especially abundant, there were no shops or bazaars. If the villagers sold their produce, it was in their houses or in open markets or fairs in the empty spaces in the village. The adjacent large cities would have provided a sufficient outlet for most of their products.



It is possible to see regional differences in the economy. In the north, stock-raising seems especially important, in the centre the olive, and in the south grains and fruit trees; but all shared a common basis of Mediterranean agriculture.

The remains indicate a remarkable lack of specialization: all the houses are of the same plan, though they vary in size; everyone seems to have lived in the same way, each village pursued essentially the same activities. Only a few large villages — more like towns — in the southern region, seem to have been devoted especially to the manufacture of olive oil on a larger scale. The peasants appear to have been independent landowners, there is little evidence of *coloni* or large estates. They built houses for themselves on a small scale, with one or two rooms; then expanded them by adding rooms. The largest houses appear to be the homes of numerous families, rather than the grand dwellings of large landowners.

The analysis of the remains makes it possible finally to follow the historical development of the entire region, and to seek an explanation for its prosperity and growth (pp. 275–321). The initial settlement, from the 1st c. through the mid-3rd, was marked by constant expansion, as in all Syria, the result of a secure frontier and the decline of nomadism. There is little or no evidence for the great landowners and veterans whom Tchalenko considered responsible for this first phase, but the extensive traces of Roman surveying indicate that the government played a major rôle, at least in the beginning.

The greatest flourishing of this area came between 350 and 550, culminating around 500. By the end of the period, there were from three to eight times as many rooms (varying with region, the greatest increase in the north) than there had been at the beginning. This meant that the amount of land per room diminished by a corresponding factor. Yet, the population was not growing poorer. On the contrary, the richer decoration and more substantially built houses imply increasing wealth despite the greater density of population. The explanation lies in the greater production of olive oil: the cash crop enabled small amounts of land to be used more profitably, so that the last stage of expansion came not from any extension of agriculture, but from increasing adaptation to a market economy. The markets were in the cities (the hills are surrounded by a network of urban centers), and anything exported would have been handled by merchants there. Actually, since the oil was made from the mountain olive, it may have been of an inferior quality, not suitable for export.

In any case, the poor were not growing poorer, but seemed to have lived increasingly well. Since they could continue to build at a high standard and to add rooms to their houses, it is clear that they were not crushed by high taxes, nor oppressed by avaricious landlords (for whom there is no evidence here in any case). The big change comes after 550, when there is virtually no more house construction, though churches did continue to be built. This suggests a period of stagnation, coinciding with known disasters: the plague, devastating in 542 and recurring throughout the century, climatic problems, and especially the destruction of Antioch and Apamea by the Persians. In spite of all this, the population seems to have gone on growing, as attested by increasing subdivision of the houses of Dêhès. Yet those remains (still the only ones excavated; all the work here depends on surveys) show an increasing squalor which implies impoverishment. Tate wrote of a 'Malthusian crisis' in which the end of expansion meant that the region was overpopulated while the decline of the urban markets reduced the possibility of selling produce to support the growing population. In his general conclusion (pp. 343–50) Tate puts this region in the broader context and shows that its development is not different from that of the basalt region to the south and east or the Hauran beyond Damascus. The population everywhere seems to have reached a peak in the 6th c., when the whole country held as many people as it could support. Evidence of inscriptions from elsewhere in the empire seems to offer confirmation, by suggesting an increasing emigration from the villages of Syria. Yet at the same time, all regions seem to have been exceptionally prosperous.

If all this is correct (and the evidence is very convincing), some major theories of the decline of the Roman empire will have to be revised or abandoned. The idea, for example, that the peasants were driven into poverty, and their numbers into decline, by the crushing power of landlords or the ever-increasing demands of the state (most clearly expressed by A. H. M. Jones; references and discussion of this and other theories, oddly enough, appear not here but in an enormous footnote on pp. 7–9) finds no support whatever in this region. Nor does the theory, particularly espoused by Moses Finley, that the cities were merely parasitic centers of consumption. On the contrary, the location of the limestone hills at the centre of one of the densest concentrations of cities in the empire shows that city and village worked together, with the city providing an essential market where the villages could sell their products and buy what they needed. Finally, Tate points out that the peasants formed the vast majority of the population everywhere, and concludes with the paradox that the countryside did not suffer from oppression by the cities, but that the cities would have been in a stronger position had they been able to exercise firmer control over the countryside, and extract a greater proportion of its surplus. If ancient society reached a dead end, it was not because of a mentality which favoured acquisition over production, but because the peasants had no technical means of increasing their production and thus petrified their surpluses in stone, leaving the ruins that still stand.

Even a very long summary like this does not do justice to the abundant documentation and sophisticated analysis everywhere manifest. Tate has set the study of these villages on a new basis, replaced the conclusions (though not the detailed reports, which still need to be consulted) of his predecessors, and opened important new vistas for the study of late Roman economy and society, and for the whole question of its decline and fall. Although the accumulation of detail will deter all but specialists from reading the entire work, anyone with an interest in the period will benefit from its summaries and conclusions.

Although seemingly complete in itself, this work is described as 'Tome I', of an unspecified number of volumes. In fact, the reader is never told how many volumes there will be or what they will contain. It is therefore difficult to criticize the author for apparent omissions. One can only presume, for example, that churches and monasteries, local administration, the rôle of the state and the relation of these places to the cities in whose territory they lay, will be treated elsewhere. The promise of future volumes no doubt accounts for the lack of a bibliography and for the totally inadequate index (limited to place-names), but hardly justifies frequent sloppy citations of the kind 'M. I. Finley, ouvrage cité' (where? — often hard to tell).

Yet, judged by what it presents, the volume is a masterpiece of organization and synthesis, a monument worthy of its very distinguished predecessors, and a fine testament to the constantly important work of the IFAPO. It answers most of the basic questions posed by Butler and Tchalenko. Now, it is possible to understand the ecology of the region, to see how it could support so many settlements, to follow their progress through periods of relative growth or decline, and to envision the district at its height in the 6th c. The only major question not answered directly — what happened to these sites? — actually lies outside the subject, which ends with the 7th c. But the work does provide one essential element for that, by giving an image of the district at the end of antiquity. It is strikingly different from that previously imagined: instead of abandoned villages, as derelict in the 7th c. as now, the Arab conquerors found a region as densely populated as the land would support, in a state of stagnation which only increased, for whatever reason, under their rule. This knowledge, coupled with the results of the Dêhès excavations, will enable the history of the region, however imperfectly, to be projected through the Umayyad period at least.

Here, as elsewhere, there is much to be done. Take, for example, the question of generation and use of surplus. Certainly, the presence of these fine stone houses (and churches) constructed

continuously until the beginning of the 7th c., indicates prosperity and a disposable surplus, even after taxes were paid (presuming the authorities could extract them from the villagers of these steep hills), but the use of the surplus needs further reflection. Stone houses may have consumed a great deal of money, but they are not a store of value which can readily be converted to other uses, and therefore not an entirely suitable way to invest capital. In fact, it is far from evident that the peasants were 'reduced to petrifying their surplus in stone' rather than following the more normal method of accumulating gold or silver. The analysis of the church treasure of Kaper Koraon, from the immediate vicinity of this region, shows that villages like these could have impressive amounts of silver plate in their churches.<sup>9</sup> This is a communal store of easily convertible wealth, for such objects could be melted as needed and replaced. The even more spectacular treasure of the monastery of Holy Zion in Lycia is another example, amazingly rich for such a remote and obscure location. Gold and silver are naturally more likely to disappear than stone houses, but their existence may be postulated and added to the evidence of the remains to give an even more impressive image of late antique prosperity.

One question not discussed is that of population. Plainly, there was a dense network of substantial villages throughout a large area, and presumably a great many people living in them. How to calculate the total, even to an order of magnitude? Here, too, more research would be desirable, if it could be done. Any figures depend on knowing how many people lived in each house. Tate frequently makes the assumption, often duly qualified, that each room was the dwelling of a nuclear family. If so, the addition or division of rooms indicates a growing population, rather than a rising standard of living in which a family might have more rooms at its disposal. The uniformity of the rooms, and the absence of any indication of a specialized function, seem to favor Tate's assumption. If it is correct, one might imagine that each room was occupied by 4 or more people. Since there are some 700 villages with an average of perhaps a hundred rooms each, the total could be astonishingly high, of the order of 300,000 people in the district. I have no idea how realistic such figures might be (huge margins of error are involved), but they could usefully be considered in a work like this.

Tate's general conclusions about the rural economy of late antiquity will provoke far more discussion than appropriate for a review. His points about the prosperity of the countryside seem incontrovertible, but need much more investigation. They would gain strength if further parallels were sought. A notable place to look is Asia Minor, where the entire Mediterranean coast contains similar settlements, which also seem to reach a height in the 5th c. The most obvious are those of Cilicia, next to Syria, but they have hardly been studied. Lycia, in the southwest, shows a development strikingly parallel to this region, with great prosperity in the 5th c. Their subsequent decline, even disappearance, also (unexpectedly) finds a parallel here.<sup>10</sup> In both cases, the change which took place by the 8th or 9th c. involves an even more precipitous decline than could be envisioned without the archaeological evidence.

The work is so stimulating that much more could be said, but this should suffice to give an impression of its importance, and to suggest that it be read by a wide range of scholars. It is, as it happens, one of three works on the countryside of the late antique Near East which

<sup>9</sup> See Marlia Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium* (Baltimore 1986) and the valuable articles in S. Boyd and M. Mango (edd.), *Ecclesiastical silver plate in sixth century Byzantium* (Washington 1993). Among them is a study by Tate himself, "Prosperité des villages de la Syrie du Nord au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle" 93-97, in which he shows that he is fully aware of these treasures and their rôle in the local economy. That is perhaps a subject to be discussed in the next volume.

<sup>10</sup> Prof. Tate did not pursue this possible parallel because of an aberrant interpretation of the remains by Martin Harrison, who discovered many of them. See my remarks, "Lycia in History" in James Morganstern (ed.), *The fort at Dereğzi* (Tübingen 1993) 15-22 and, in much more detail, "The coast of Lycia in the Byzantine age," *DOP* 48 (1994).

appeared at almost the same time, and naturally invite comparison with each other. The other two deal with a region at the opposite end of the Levant, the Negev in southern Israel. They offer some valuable parallels of material, but not of scholarship, a domain in which they make the work of Tate look even more impressive.

### The Negev

The villages of Syria, however desolate their landscape, lie in close proximity to fertile, settled areas. Equally remarkable, for the questions considered here, is a far more forbidding region, at the southern extremity of the Levant, the desert of the Negev. Although the grim southern part has never been settled, the northern district, inland from Gaza and the coast, and south of the cultivated plains of southern Palestine, presents the remarkable image of substantial well-built settlements with numerous houses and impressive churches set in a landscape which seems totally arid and has been deserted for most of the last thousand years. It contains far fewer sites than the Syrian hills: seven major compact settlements — Elousa, Nessana, Eboda, Sobata, Kurnub (usually identified as Mampsis), Rehovot (not certainly identified), and Saadi (apparently Soudanon) — as well as numerous scattered sites and extensive stone walls, dikes and other installations which have been taken as evidence for a large-scale agriculture.

These sites astonish the visitor by their remains, but most of all by the mere fact of their existence in a harsh and virtually unpopulated desert. They have consequently stirred interest since they were first discovered, but, unlike those of northern Syria, rarely attracted a high level of synthesis.

The sites of the Negev were first reported by Ulrich Seetzen and Edward Robinson who visited them in 1807 and 1838 respectively.<sup>11</sup> Both these pioneers give colorful travellers' accounts with summary descriptions of these sites among many others. The reports of E. H. Palmer, who discovered the rest of the sites in 1870, were more scientific, with plans and copies of inscriptions, but still very brief.<sup>12</sup> The first detailed descriptions were those of Alois Musil (1901/2), who published the first photographs, drew many plans, and devoted considerable attention to individual buildings as well as entire sites.<sup>13</sup>

Two surveys of a much more comprehensive nature were undertaken at virtually the same time by archaeologists on opposite sides in the First World War. Both tried to view the sites as part of a larger system, and to understand as well as describe them.

Theodore Wiegand was already famed for his excavations at Miletus and Priene, Baalbek and Palmyra, when he was appointed chief of staff to the Turkish general commanding in the northern Sinai, which was to serve as a base for attack on the Suez Canal. He used his two years there to produce a thorough description of its sites, with plans, drawings and photographs, many of them from German airplanes.<sup>14</sup> He paid particular attention to masonry, building types, plans, and chronology, and attempted a general synthesis of the material in an historical context. Wiegand traced the origin of the settlements to forts for defending trade and agriculture, identified their high point as the end of the 5th c., noted their continued flourishing through the 6th, and their demise after the Arab conquest.

<sup>11</sup> Ulrich Jasper Seetzen's *Reisen* (ed. F. Kruse et al.) (Berlin 1854-59) III. 11, 41, 43; Edward Robinson, *Biblical researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petraea* (Boston 1841) I. 283-98.

<sup>12</sup> E. H. Palmer, "The desert of the Tih and the country of Moab," *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*, Jan. 1871, 3-80.

<sup>13</sup> Alois Musil, *Arabia Petraea II: Edom* (Vienna 1908).

<sup>14</sup> Th. Wiegand, *Sinai* (Berlin 1920). The work is equally, if not more, interesting for its long description of desert warfare (1-35).



Two English archaeologists, much younger than Wiegand, travelled through the same area early in 1914, describing it in a long report promptly published in a learned journal and much later reproduced as a book.<sup>15</sup> The work of C. Leonard Woolley and T. E. Lawrence still retains its value as the most comprehensive and interesting account of the region. Together with that of Wiegand, it is perhaps the only book on the subject which one can actually enjoy reading. The authors, for the first time, attempted to gain a general understanding of the region as a whole, not simply of its individual sites and buildings. They conscientiously (and sometimes amusingly) described all the sites, making plans of them and of individual buildings, as well as drawings of architectural details. They published numerous inscriptions and photographs. Although many of their site descriptions have been superseded, their general view of the history has not; instead, its broad viewpoint has yielded to an atomistic approach that almost precludes understanding of the whole.

In the chapter on *The History of the Southern Desert* (34-36), the authors (actually Woolley for this section) traced the origins of these curious settlements and tried to answer the basic and obvious question of why they were there at all. They believed that the towns originated in settlements of soldiers and monks, and lived through trade and agriculture. Addressing the obvious environmental question, they concluded, on rather convincing grounds, that the climate had not changed significantly, but that the land was as desperately poor then as now. Its prosperity came from concentrated Byzantine efforts to conserve water and improve agriculture, especially through widespread terracing. They were the first to recognize that the towns were part of a larger whole, with numerous smaller outlying settlements. They saw the 5th and 6th c. as the time of highest prosperity, which came to an end with the Arab conquest, after which the sites gradually faded away. The chapter, like most of the book, is still worth reading.

In recent decades, especially since the establishment of the state of Israel, the Negev has attracted much archaeological activity and restoration, but has inspired no general study, at least not in a western language. Individual sites have been discussed, most notably Nessana in the splendid publications of the Colt Expedition which revealed the remarkable papyri (full of information rarely exploited in the works surveyed here), Mampsis, subject of a two-volume study (1998) by Abraham Negev, the dean of Israeli archaeologists in this area, and Sobata, subject of three monographs.<sup>16</sup>

Except for the Nessana volumes, which offer much of general interest and provide a wealth of information on social, cultural and economic history, these works are typically detailed studies of individual buildings with virtually no general conclusions or attempt to discuss the entire phenomenon which these settlements represent. In addition, there have been numerous studies of sites, types of buildings, and special problems — notably the agriculture, availability and use of water, and possibility of settlement. General presentations have been limited to short or popular works, notably by Abraham Negev. A study which would survey the main sites and put them into a context has so far been lacking; the volume to be considered, therefore, is all the more welcome.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> C. L. Woolley and T. E. Lawrence, *The Wilderness of Zin* (New York 1936), first published as the *Annual of the Palestine Exploration Fund* for 1914-15.

<sup>16</sup> H. D. Colt, *Excavations at Nessana I* (London 1962), L. Casson and E. Hettich, *Nessana II: The literary papyri* (Princeton 1950), *Excavations at Nessana III: non-literary papyri* (Princeton 1958); A. Negev, *The architecture of Mampsis* (2 volumes, Qedem 26 and 27, Jerusalem 1988); A. Segal, *The Byzantine city of Shivta* (Oxford 1983) and *Architectural decoration in Byzantine Shivta* (Oxford 1988) and R. Rosenthal-Hegginbottom, *Die Kirche von Sobota und die Dreiecksidenkirche des Nahen Osten* (Wiesbaden 1982).

<sup>17</sup> Note that these and the following remarks are based on works which have appeared in western languages. There is also an extensive and doubtless important literature in Hebrew, available to few

The striking appearance of these sites, standing out in the desert with their large and elaborately decorated churches and impressive fortifications, has led to a certain exaggeration of their importance. Most of the recent literature calls them 'cities', a term most often used without question or definition. Arthur Segal, in his treatment of Shivta, even considers how the Negev settlements "could develop, grow and crystallize into real cities", a change which he attributes to the Byzantine period.<sup>18</sup> Calling an ancient site a city has serious implications, not so much about its size, but its nature, organization and function. In fact, with one certain and another possible exception, these were not cities at all, and treating them as such can lead to serious misconceptions. Calling them cities is reminiscent of the early, romantic treatment of the Syrian villages, whose fine masonry and seemingly elegant buildings made a similarly overwhelming impression. In fact, the Syrian villages could provide an excellent comparison for the Negev sites, a point which never seems to be made. The question of urbanism is especially problematic in the next work to be considered.

JOSEPH SHERESHEVSKI, *BYZANTINE URBAN SETTLEMENTS IN THE NEGEV DESERT* (Beer-Sheva V, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, Beer-Sheva 1991). 277 pp. with 13 figures and 19 tables in text + 70 plates and 7 large site plans.

This book is extremely welcome as a long-needed general treatment of the Negev sites which it considers in detail, separately, in relation to each other and in comparison with sites elsewhere. It produces a clear analysis, which will be of value to anyone interested in the problems of the time, the region, or the kind of sites discussed. In spite of problems of conception implied in its title, the book presents a valuable summary of present knowledge and adds some interesting perspectives from the point of view of architecture in a desert. Its strength lies in its attention to domestic architecture, its presentation of practical aspects of the sites, and in its clear synthesis of earlier work.

The author is an architect, whose aim is to study the Negev 'cities' in relation to their environment, with the view of comparing them with modern settlements. His approach, therefore, is not historical, to trace the growth and development of the sites, but to see them at their height and to draw general conclusions, usually relating to plan and organization, which he hopes then to apply to modern times. The discussion of recent settlement, however, is only appended to the work, which faithfully reflects its title. Such an approach, which involves studying the settlements as living entities, is novel and practical and leads to some extremely valuable insights, not only into the sites themselves, but also into the merits of existing scholarship. The work is clearly divided into two major parts: presentation of the individual sites, and a synthesis of their 'urban' characteristics. These sections (caps. 2, 4 and 5) are the most valuable part of the book, and could well be read without the rest, which is far less successful.

The opening chapter, 'The Background', reveals the strengths and weaknesses of the work, and some problems endemic to the subject. Strength is manifest in the clear presentation of the climate (less unpleasant than it might appear from the annual extremes of 2 and 46 degrees), its judicious treatment of climatic change (not drastic, but perhaps more humid in the Byzantine

outside Israel (those who know Hebrew are rarely interested in this period and vice versa). I have no doubt that the general picture of current scholarship would look quite different if such works were translated or at least made available in comprehensive summaries.

<sup>18</sup> Segal, *Shivta* 23 f. Note that many archaeologists working in Palestine and Trans-Jordan use the term 'Byzantine' for part of the period usually called 'late antique' or 'late Roman', specifically from 395 to the Arab conquest. 'Late Roman', confusingly, is reserved for the age from Diocletian to Theodosius. To avoid constant comment, I shall simply follow the terminology found in the books discussed.

period. But now, and the natural characteristics of desert architecture contrast buildings with slanted roofs, property oriented. On the other hand, the chapters on the historical background and the Byzantine city are rather superficial.

The latter introduces the prime problem of these sites: What are they? The question is neither raised nor answered. Instead, S. notes that Elousa was the only place with the status of polis, but calls the rest 'urban settlements'.<sup>19</sup> The meaning of this, unless it is equivalent to 'city', is not obvious. With the city undefined, the work falls into a quandry typical of this subject since the sites have virtually none of the characteristics of cities, how can they be explained in urban terms? Another problem which often arises in discussions of (real) cities of this period concerns urban decline. According to S., who reflects current Israeli thinking (and that of others, as in an important study by Hugh Kennedy<sup>20</sup>), the Byzantine period saw a breakdown in urban planning and regularity: colonnades were blocked, open squares filled in. The remains of most places (except, inconveniently, the Negev 'cities') reveal these changes unambiguously, but do not necessarily associate them with the Byzantine period. In the rare cases where concrete evidence is available, such deterioration seems to be associated with the period of transition to Muslim rule, or even later. The two problems are connected, for if villages, which never had urban planning or spaces, are presented as cities, then it is easy to talk of a breakdown in planning.

The most useful part of the book — a valuable summary and synthesis of existing scholarship with some extremely pertinent contributions of the author — is the long chapter on the individual sites (20-102). Here, and only here, can the reader find a coherent account of all the Negev 'cities': their remains, their development (although S. claims to eschew history, he in fact gives unambiguous accounts of the development of each site), and the various theories which have been advanced to explain them.<sup>21</sup> Each discussion is clearly arranged by topic: History of Research; History of the Site; Town Plan; Dwellings; Public Buildings; Defence; Water Supply; Features of Construction; and Agricultural Devices. It is thus extremely easy to find the material and compare one site with another. On the other hand, the curious lack of an index does not facilitate reference. Since these sites show much more variety than those of northern Syria, they are worth considering individually.

The most important — though one of the worst preserved — was the sole attested city, Elousa. This is by far the largest of the sites (960 x 550 m), and shows some evidence of regular planning, along definable streets. It contains at least 4 churches, all on the periphery. The cathedral, the largest church in the whole Negev, is richly decorated with imported marble, mosaics, and painting. Close to it is a very small theatre rebuilt in the 5th c., a time of evident prosperity and growth. The city was not walled, but had a series of towers around the periphery, while the continuous external house walls formed a barrier against routine dangers (tribesmen, wild animals, etc.) though not a serious attack. Except for the cathedral, the buildings were typical of the Negev, with houses roofed with stone slabs on arches. A large

19 The question is actually more complicated: Mampsis also appears as a city in the 6th c., in the lists of Hierocles and George of Cyprus, and on the Madaba map. It is usually identified with Kurnub, but that is the smallest of the sites, and was, according to the thorough report of its excavator, A. Negev, abandoned in the mid 6th c. This dissonance becomes even more striking when Mampsis is mentioned in Nessana papyri of the 7th c. It would seem that the identification deserves further study.

20 H. Kennedy, "From polis to madina: urban change in late antique and early Islamic Syria," *Past and Present* 106 (1985) 3-27.

21 A more summary, but extremely useful, presentation can be found in the *New encyclopedia of archaeological excavations in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem 1993), s.vv Elusa, Kurnub, Nessana, Oboda, Rehovot and Sobota (no article on Saadi); these articles devote less attention to domestic architecture than does Shereshevski.

wine-press outside the city hints at a major economic activity. Wells were apparently the main source of water in this sandy site, which had constantly to struggle with the elements. Huge piles of sand outside the walls attest to major efforts to keep the place clean, if not habitable. It is possible that environmental conditions were a factor in the desertion of the city around the end of the 7th c. In its size, possibly regular streets and at least one secular public building, Elousa stands out among these sites; but investigation has been so limited that little direct comparison can be made.

Two sites, Eboda and Nessana, are distinguished from the rest by their fortifications. Both include hilltops surrounded by strong walls within which the church seems as important as the military. In both cases, the fortified area has two parts, an enclosure without (surviving) structures, apparently for the troops, and another occupied by a large monastery (Nessana) or two churches, one of them a monastery (Eboda). In both cases, residential districts stretched outside the walls, at Nessana perhaps along regular streets, at Eboda in one densely-packed quarter outside the fort and another on the slopes where numerous houses, many with wine cellars and storage bins for grain, are half-carved into the rock. Otherwise, houses in both sites are of the usual courtyard type. Nessana's poorly preserved civilian settlement contained at least two churches and two caravansarays, one of which might be identified with a hostel of 96 beds mentioned in a papyrus. At Eboda, remains of 4 wine-presses, one of them a substantial structure (color fig. 5), again suggest that grapes were an major crop. Most remarkable in the arid landscape of this site, where the water supply depended on cisterns and storage of run-off, is a stone late antique bath-house; it seems to have drawn its water from a well.

The other sites essentially consist of churches (color fig. 6) (better studied than the other remains) and houses, usually built around courtyards. At Kurnub and Sobata, they sometimes incorporate substantial Nabatean dwellings, some with attached stables. The large houses of Kurnub originally resembled those of cities, with reception rooms and mosaic decoration, but by the Byzantine phase had generally been subdivided or crudely expanded. The houses are closely packed together, often with their outer walls forming a rough barricade (Kurnub alone has a fortification wall). They rarely follow a regular plan (Saadi may be an exception), but are connected by narrow alleys and passages. Public buildings are practically non-existent, though Kurnub does have a bath and a caravansaray. Two of the sites, Rehovot and Saadi, are as yet only partially studied.

With the exception of Elousa, none of these sites gives evidence of having been a city; that is, they lack public and administrative buildings, places for meeting, or evidence of specialization. Their remains, which appear to be of substantial villages, invite comparison with those of other districts of the Levant, notably the Hauran and northern Syria, and most particularly with some of the larger villages of the territory of Apamea.

This volume attempts some comparison, but of an infelicitous kind, by devoting a chapter to the town of Umm al-Jimal in northern Jordan. This large site, occupied from the Roman through the Umayyad periods, contains a *praetorium* and a barracks, some 120 blocks of houses, 15 churches, some large, and significant open spaces. The place is of great interest in itself, but really irrelevant to the sites of the Negev, from which it differs in size and apparent function (though that needs to be defined in all cases). Likewise, the parallels with other sites in the Hauran, though potentially promising, are too superficial to be of any use.

The long section on Urban Characteristics (134-214) contains much of interest despite its title. It offers valuable comparison of town plans (mostly unsystematic), adaptation to climate (usually ignored), types and plan of houses (an interesting discussion), public buildings, baths and agricultural structures. In much of this, the author's training as an architect gives added value to the discussion, particularly of methods and materials of construction. The most illuminating section deals with population. S. tabulates previous estimates, which vary wildly. By carefully considering the size of the settlements and their probable density of



[illegible]

It is not immediately obvious why current research on the Negev seems so narrow and unsophisticated when compared with that on Syria. Certainly not because of the region or the nature of its remains, as the works of Wiegand and Woolley and Lawrence show. Yet, whatever the reason, it seems incomprehensible that works on this subject seem to ignore a resource unavailable elsewhere — that is, the Nessana papyri.<sup>23</sup> From them, it is possible to approach not only the kind of economic questions so often raised, but also to appreciate the relation of the town (called a fort or a village in the documents) to the provincial authorities, and especially — what the bare stones of other sites can never reveal — its social composition. There is a wealth of information about the population — its ethnic composition, its level of education, its

23 They may well, of course, be exploited in works published only in Hebrew.

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That is the microcosmic view: it would be possible to correlate such information with the remains to understand one site far better. Yet the documents also reveal much about the whole region. A macrocosmic view, as so often applied in Syria, could also be used here. Why not consider the sites together, especially in their economic relations with each other, and the outside world? It should be possible, by correlating all kinds of available information, to identify the bases of their economy, and in particular, to appreciate the importance of wine production, which might have played the rôle here that the olive did in northern Syria. In that case, the name of Gaza, the greatest port of the region, and a center of the wine trade, might reasonably make an appearance. Yet it virtually never does (except, of course, in the Nessana papyri; the article in the *New encyclopedia of archaeological excavations in the Holy Land*, a major reference, says nothing about Gaza's economy). The kind of broad approach used in other regions would surely bring satisfactory, even remarkable results here.

The 'cities' seem all the more remarkable for their apparent isolation, far removed from each other in the desert, with no evident context. The impression is reinforced by most publications which deal with them as isolated entities — individual sites with individual buildings, practically never the subject of synthesis or of a general view. In fact, these towns or villages were surrounded by smaller settlements built especially along the major and minor wadis. They consist of anything from isolated farmsteads to large agglomerations and form part of a vast network of structures, some apparently residential, but most devoted to the conservation and utilization of the most precious local resource, water. Most of the wadis near the towns, and many elsewhere, have walls, dikes, cisterns, and other structures appropriate for ensuring maximum use of the land (color fig. 7). The entire system was treated in a classic study of Philip Mayerson, *The ancient agricultural regime of Nessana and the Central Negeb* (London 1960, somewhat expanded from its original publication in *Nessana* I. 211-69). Since Mayerson

possessed an intimate knowledge of the Nessana papyri, he was able to analyze the remains of the agricultural works (he did not treat the settlements) and put them into an historical context. He showed, or seemed to show, that the impenetrable walls were indeed for agricultural purposes, though in many cases their function was difficult to determine, and that a great many belonged to the Byzantine period, though, here, too, there were great problems of dating the anonymous works of a technology which hardly changed through many ages. By making careful use of the documents, he was able to show that these areas largely produced wheat and barley and that they were owned by free individuals, most of whom resided in the towns. He laid the foundation for understanding the system which united town and countryside.

Mayer's work evidently influenced that of Y. Kedar, "Ancient agriculture at Shivta in the Negev," *IEJ* 7 (1957) 173-89, which made a serious attempt to correlate town and country. It studied a region of some 300 hectares around Shivta, showing how every inch of soil in the wadis was put to use in individual holdings, and producing a picture similar to that of Mayer.

More recently, the extent of such settlements has been brought home by the impressive publications of the Archaeological Survey of Israel, a series of large-scale maps with accompanying texts which give the result of surveys carried out in anticipation of the move of the Israel Defense Force from the Sinai to the Negev and consequent inaccessibility of much of that area to archaeology. Six volumes on the Negev have so far appeared (all published in Jerusalem, all with the title *Map of preceding the place name*): 168: *Sede Boqer East* (by R. Cohen, 1981), 169: *Sede Boqer West* (R. Cohen, 1985), 196: *Har Nafsa* (Y. Lender, 1990), 198: *Har Hamran* (M. Haiman, 1986), 200: *Mizpe Ramon Southwest* (M. Haiman, 1991), and 225: *Har Saggi Northeast* (G. Avni, 1992). The first two deal with the region of Avdat/Eboda (on which see below), the next three with a region just to the south, and the last with a district near the southern edge of settlement. In addition, a most useful supplement to 168 contains *Ancient rock inscriptions* (1990); the Arabic inscriptions are published by Moshe Sharon, who also edited those included in the other volumes.

These surveys contain summary descriptions of all the sites in a given region, which normally run into the hundreds. Even more striking is the preponderance of Byzantine sites. Volume 196 contains 223 such sites, volume 198 has 170, and so on. In every region, this period is the most productive of sites (not the same as settlements, since every place with evidence of human activity is counted); even the most unpromising regions seem to have reached their peak at this time. Early Arab sites are much fewer, but partly because many Byzantine sites show continuity. None, however, is attested (by remains or inscriptions) after the mid-9th c., and the vast majority end in the mid-8th.

The settlements are mostly built along the wadis, and appear to be agricultural: they have extensive terracing and water installations, and sometimes threshing-floors and wine-presses. "In all probability, these settlements formed the agricultural mainstay of the area's large urban centres" (*Map* 167, xiii f.). In fact, as the surveys have continued to show, the picture is somewhat more complicated, for alongside agriculture sheep-raising seems to have played a prominent rôle. It seems clear that the population consisted as much of nomads as settled farmers, for many traces of simple encampments were also discovered. The surveys, however bare their exposition of individual sites, and however scattered the evidence for dating, enable a realistic picture of a regional economy and society to be drawn because of their sheer volume of information, and provide the material which allows the 'cities' to be put into their broader context.

For the period of transition, remains and inscriptions combine to produce a coherent image. Many sites continue through the 7th c. without a break, their material culture reflecting no profound change. It is even often difficult to distinguish Byzantine and Early Arab sites. It appears that the area fell to the Moslems without any violent interruption, suggesting,

according to Moshe Sharon (*Map* 196, xxv), a gradual infiltration rather than a rapid conquest. The inscriptions are relatively numerous, and datable by their lettering to the Umayyad and early Abbasid periods; some in fact are dated, usually to the early 8th c.; the latest dated inscription is of 782, but undated examples seem to continue into the mid 9th c. For the most part, their content is banal, simply asking the forgiveness of the Lord for an individual. Strictly Moslem formulas are very rare but invocations to the 'Lord of Moses and Aaron' have clear Koranic parallels. The general absence of reference to the Prophet has led to speculation about the nature of Islam in this period, as frequently expounded in Prof. Sharon's works, a subject that lies outside the present discussion. In any case, these surveys show that the existing culture, based on agriculture, animal husbandry, and careful use of water, continued unchanged, if more and more diminished through the Umayyad period, and survived on a much reduced scale for a century thereafter.

All this seems perfectly straightforward and uncontroversial. A new work, however, the subject of the rest of this essay, has called everything into question.

YEHUDA D. NEVO, *PAGANS AND HERDERS: A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE NEGEV RUNOFF CULTIVATION SYSTEMS IN THE BYZANTINE AND EARLY ARAB PERIODS*. (IPS Ltd., Midreshet Ben-Gurion, Negev, Israel). 259 pages including 35 plates and 81 figures, 9 tables, 7 maps in text.

This volume offers the first detailed study of the Negev countryside, treating a region of 64 square kilometers in the central Negev, around Avdat/Eboda. For the first time, plans of sites and individual buildings, often based on excavation, are presented. They include structures normally identified as houses, farms, and agricultural and hydraulic installations. This study treats the whole elaborate system that permitted human settlement in this harsh environment, and seems at first sight to be a work of major significance.

This system has usually been seen as the product of a long development since Nabatean times, and associated with agriculture. These districts have been considered as seats of a substantial rural population which played a major rôle in supporting the economy of the 'cities' by producing grain and fruit in their wadis. The validity of such an image seemed reinforced by the experiments of M. Evanari and his team who actually reconstructed some of the hydrological systems and achieved successful farming, traces of which may still be seen in surprisingly cool and shady groves in the deserted wasteland. For that, see M. Evanari, L. Shanan and N. Tadmor, *The Negev — The challenge of the desert* (Cambridge, MA 1971).

The present book questions every aspect of the accepted theories, and proposes a completely different interpretation based on what appears to be careful archaeological excavation and survey and critical analysis of the remains. If it is correct, the whole image of the Negev will have to be reviewed and reconstructed. At best, this is a work which will stimulate research and thought on subjects long taken for granted; at worst (and overwhelmingly likely), it is an eccentric fantasy which serious scholars will have to waste time refuting.

The work has three main parts: an archaeological examination of the remains on the Avdat region (13-86), a study of the hydromechanics and agricultural possibilities (87-108), and an interpretation of the remains (109-136). Two appendices offer comparative material from a site (Nahal Lavan) outside the region surveyed, and an analysis, with extensive illustration, of the pottery found. The plates, with 6 rather small photographs on a quarto page, are accompanied by very helpful explanations on facing pages. The work is well indexed and has a useful bibliography. Unfortunately, two key works which would help understand its arguments — a detailed survey of Sede Boqer, the major site, and a broader interpretation of the religious aspects of the sites — are announced only as forthcoming. Since the author is now deceased, it seems probable that the present work will have to remain the essential presentation of his points of view.



The archaeological discussion begins with structures normally considered houses. They fall into two groups, single-roomed square structures occurring singly, and rectangular buildings, often of multiple rooms, occurring in clusters. The archaeological evidence (5 of the first group and 1 of the second were excavated, though many more were surveyed) shows that the first group dates to the 5th-6th c., the second to the Umayyad period, with a gap of about 150 years between them. Activity in the region apparently ceased by the end of the 8th c. The small structures are carefully built on platforms, surrounded by enclosures and strangely distributed for farm buildings, set rather close together without outbuildings. They appear to have been deliberately destroyed. The larger structures, rather poorly built, are characterized by employing larger tall stones as quoins. The author interprets these as stelae, which he identifies with the sacred stones rather vaguely mentioned in traditions relating to pre-Islamic Arabia. Similarly, he identifies some of the stones in the smaller buildings, particularly those projecting from the walls, as having a sacred rôle. All of this is asserted, not proved. The less romantic but more probable notion that the builders simply used larger stones to reinforce the corners of their structures is not considered, even to be dismissed. This notion of sacred stones and therefore of cult buildings forms the basis of the theories which the work propounds.

Nevo's basic 'discovery' is that buildings formerly considered as routine structures like farmhouses were in fact devoted to a hitherto unknown pagan cult, and that this dominated the entire region. Everything else in the book flows from this idea, and all remains are interpreted in the light of it. At first sight, this seems like the most primitive kind of archaeology: if a structure cannot be identified, assign it to a cult, preferably unknown. Yet, the questions raised about the nature and organization of the buildings seem to demand a careful second look.

These structures, normally considered as forming parts of villages, are part of a large network of remains which include terraces, enclosure walls, dikes, water channels, and pits, all of which had been taken as evidence for an extensive system to exploit the extremely limited water resources of the region. None of that escapes the criticisms of Nevo, who maintains, by what appears to be a careful examination of the remains, that they were not built with such aims, and could not in fact have served any useful purpose. Formerly, many of these works were attributed to the Nabateans, a claim which Nevo purports to refute in a discussion (54-56) fundamental to his developed theory. He dismisses the normal dating by surface potsherds (Nabatean sherds are routinely found in and around these sites) and maintains that the archaeological evidence indicates a date in the late 5th/early 6th c. The extensive works, therefore, were not the product of a long development, but represent a large-scale project carried out in a relatively short time, and thus one that needed government funding. Since most of the works have no apparent practical function, they are naturally attributed to a cult, especially now that the 'houses' are seen as pagan shrines. "Their ritual significance is of course unknown" (85). This does not seem like a high order of reasoning: to attribute extensive remains which you cannot explain to a religion about which nothing is known. Surely archaeology has advanced beyond that.

Yet, once again, the arguments against the traditional interpretation are presented so convincingly, or insidiously, that the whole system might have to be re-examined to see whether it really did have the practical agricultural function which can be clearly explained. Note, though, that Mayerson already raised some questions about the function of some of the walls. He also stressed the great difficulty in dating such structures. Perhaps there is no real solution, but the arguments presented here suggest that the whole question of chronology, especially that relating to earlier epochs, should be reviewed. In any case, it seems highly improbable that the evidence for such structures could ever be so precise as to identify them as the product of one very short period within the Byzantine age.

In a sense, the chapter on hydromechanics is the most substantial, dealing concretely with fundamental questions about the economy and ecology of the region. It begins by noting that the terracing works are scattered through the Negev, not concentrated around the 'cities' as often supposed. It then proceeds to question basic assumptions about the use of water, maintaining that each terrace was a small catchment area of its own, not part of a larger system. This section criticizes the experiments of the Evanari team, pointing out that their use of modern farming techniques invalidates many of the conclusions about the situation in antiquity. A carefully argued discussion of the available rainfall and possible yields leads to the conclusion that the areas could never have supported more than a tiny population, let alone providing food for larger settlements, and that therefore most of the works are to be associated with sheep-raising rather than settled agriculture. Once again, the authors (this chapter has a co-author, Judith Koren) maintain that this was part of a vast government-financed project of the Byzantine period. For the Umayyads, they propose that the region was used for horse-breeding on the basis of frequent graffiti portraying horses.<sup>24</sup> This would explain why the Arabs repaired and reused dikes and terraces after a supposed long hiatus of 150 years.

So far, the work has stuck to archaeological remains and, however fantastic its explanations of them may seem, they are considerably more substantial than anything found in the last two chapters of general interpretation. The main points of the historical section are that the extensive remains witness a vast project in which the Byzantine government of the 5th-6th c. brought in great numbers of pagan Arab nomads, settled them in the region, and built religious buildings for them — but not houses; they lived, it seems, in tents.

To put this in context, the author discusses the development of the eastern frontier from Diocletian to the 6th c., stressing increasing demilitarization and reliance on Arab tribes, either paid to maintain the peace on the frontier or brought in as military auxiliaries and settled on imperial territory. He maintains that these tribes were largely pagan, even when they appeared to be Christian. It is necessary for the general theory of pagan cult, of course, that they should be, but the parts of the historical evidence ignored here indicate that this was not the case at all. The best known example is that of the Ghassanids, established in Syria in the 5th and 6th c.: certainly Christian, in fact enthusiastic Monophysites, as well known from texts and remains. Although no one would dispute the main point that Arab tribes were settled in the empire, the burden of proving that they were pagans rests on the author, who simply fails to make a convincing case for his point of view.

The general interpretation to which all this leads, helpfully labelled in bold face as "purely theory", is that the Byzantines attempted to civilize the border Arabs by creating new tribes (some not very persuasive discussion here of Arab traditions), whom they then settled as part of a vast 'Negev Agricultural Project' which involved building all the structures considered. Even when the structures seem to have no practical purpose, they were built simply to keep the people busy as part of their acculturation. Byzantium deliberately maintained them as pagans to keep them isolated from the Christian world farther north. It is hard to find much of value in this, even as science fiction. It may, however, have an ideological base which implies or invites comparison with modern times. Why not see the Byzantines as carrying out a civilizing mission to control the desert and to bring the blessings of civilization to their benighted neighbors, even with great make-work government projects? The deficiencies of this approach will be immediately apparent.

The work concludes with a discussion of the pagan cult, with references to pre-Islamic Arabia, and an attempt, rarely successful, to determine how the various structures were used,

<sup>24</sup> Prof. Sharon, who knows these sites intimately, assures me that in fact the images of horses are in a minority amongst those of camels, gazelles, and donkeys. In that case, a theory about horse-breeding loses its substance.

and to explain their later destruction. This chapter barely conceals the fact that there is no evidence at all for such a cult beside the arbitrary interpretation of the buildings described.

An appendix on pottery likewise inspires little confidence, especially when one of the most common types of Byzantine storage jars (on pl.1) is not recognised as Gaza jars. The name and common origin of these pots should immediately raise questions about the economy of the region. If they are associated with Gaza and found here, surely there was a relation between these sites and the coast, and what more natural than to suppose that they were producing wine for sale in the city or export from it? When that is put in conjunction with remains normally associated with agricultural activity, and with the large wine-presses in the neighbouring town of Eboda, it becomes even harder to see any merit in Nevo's theories. Elsewhere in this section, normal terms are ignored, and individual pieces misdated.<sup>25</sup>

It is difficult to know what to make of this work. It plainly involves much careful study of material which is very poorly known. Its greatest value lies on its presentation of the sites which necessarily need to be considered together with the better known 'cities' in order to understand the region as a whole. It raises real questions of interpretation, especially when dealing with the water systems and the capacity of the land to support human or animal population. These may be worth considering seriously, if only to refute. The main theses, however, seem best consigned to oblivion, to some graveyard of eccentric and unprovable theories. The historical interpretation, with Byzantium creating a vast project to settle pagan Arabs in the desert, seems totally without value (though, here, too, the work raises some questions of chronology) and the presentation of the supposed pagan cult might belong to the realm of sheer fantasy. At best, the work will stimulate more serious studies that will analyze the material and put it into a real context.

The remains certainly deserve more specific study than they have received, and should be presented in such a way that the whole system — 'cities' and settlements alike (whatever their nature) can be seen in one historical and archaeological context. A work dealing with this material, in which one could feel real confidence, would be of the greatest value for understanding a range of questions: the settlement pattern of this unpromising desert landscape, the respective contributions of the Nabataeans, Romans, Byzantines, and Arabs, the rôle of the Negev between settled and sown counties, and the conditions in the region at the time of the rise of Islam, together with the changes which the new peoples and religion brought.

The three works discussed here, with their different approaches, offer an indication of the great amount of material available for understanding rural life in the late antique Near East. They show the overwhelming importance of the archaeological record, and the need for a suitably broad conceptual basis for understanding and exploiting it. The volume of Tate provides just such a basis; Shereshevski's work organizes material in a way that conclusions might be drawn from it and shows what can be done on the more limited basis of architecture and planning; while Nevo may stand as a warning of the danger of a false basis of hypothetical and unjustifiable assumptions. If the reasoning of Tate (or, for that matter, Tchalenko) could be applied to the Negev, great progress might be made, and an overall picture of life in the late Roman countryside of the Levant be developed.<sup>26</sup> Its implications for the whole history of the Roman empire, and its decline, would be enormous.

<sup>25</sup> I rely here on the expertise of Shulla Haddad, ceramicist of the Scythopolis excavations and an unrivalled specialist on the pottery of this period, who was kind enough to comment on this section.

<sup>26</sup> I have throughout avoided discussing the third region which offers comparable material, the Hauran of southern Syria, since it is not the subject of any of the books reviewed. It is also being investigated by the IFAPO, whose first publications (J.-M. Dentzer [ed.], *Hauran I* [Paris 1986]) do both the region and the Institute full justice. Any study of the problems discussed here would naturally take the Hauran, like the outlying basalt hills and steppes of central Syria, into account.

## The late-Roman military camp at Beer Sheba: a new discovery

Peter Fabian

### Introduction

Beer Sheba was one of the important towns in southern Palestine during the Roman and Byzantine periods, but when compared with the other Negev towns of Avdat, Mamshit, Nizzana, Halutza or Rehovot the remains of Beer Sheba today are hardly impressive. Since 1900, when the modern city was established, the construction activities of the Turks, British and Israelis have greatly damaged the archaeological remains. The few salvage excavations conducted within the modern city<sup>1</sup> yielded some important information but failed to locate monumental remains. That Beer Sheba was an important center may be inferred from other sources: it is mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum* that the Romans built there a fortress in which a cohort of Dalmatian horsemen was stationed.<sup>2</sup> In the 4th c. Eusebius (*Onomastikon* B 227) mentioned Beer Sheba as the headquarters of a military unit. On the Madaba map of the 6th c. Beer Sheba is represented as a military camp.<sup>3</sup>

Abel was the first to map the ruins of Beer Sheba in 1903.<sup>4</sup> He identified the remains of churches, a public bath and cisterns, but could not identify remains of a military fortress. In 1979 Figueras,<sup>5</sup> like others before him (e.g. Fritz<sup>6</sup>), suggested that the Roman fortress mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum* was located within the boundaries of modern Beer Sheba and not in nearby Tel Sheva. According to Figueras, the remains of this fortress have completely disappeared. He tried to identify its location and suggested two possibilities on the basis of aerial photographs taken in 1949 (fig. 4 in his publication). Some ruins are visible on the photographs but it is impossible to distinguish the contours of specific structures and certainly not those of a large fortress. No supporting evidence for Figueras' claims was produced by my inspection of those areas.

In 1992 while preparing for a salvage excavation in Beer Sheba on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority I reexamined aerial photographs, both the 1949 photograph used by Figueras and others taken in 1918.<sup>7</sup> From a comparison of the 1949 photographs with those of 1918 it is clear that the British built over vast areas of the Roman-Byzantine town (the population more than doubled between 1922 and 1946<sup>8</sup>). On the 1918 photographs large unbuilt areas are visible. The 1918 photographs were taken by planes of the German air force stationed in Palestine during World War I.<sup>9</sup> The descriptions and interpretations presented below are

<sup>1</sup> R. Cohen, "Beer Sheba," *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 27 (1968) 14-16; R. Gophna, *ibid.* 3 (1962) 19 and 3 (1963) 18; Y. Israeli, *ibid.* 17 (1966) 3-4, and 22-23 (1967) 29; Y. Govrin, *ibid.* 92 (1988) 62-63 and 95 (1990) 70-71 (all in Hebrew).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Y. Tsafir, "Why were the Negev, Sinai and Edom transferred from provincia Arabia to provincia Palestina at the end of the third century A.D.?" *Cathedra* 30 (1983) 35-56 (Hebrew).

<sup>3</sup> M. Avi-Yonah, *The Madaba mosaic map* (IES, Jerusalem 1954).

<sup>4</sup> M. Abel, "Inscriptions grecques de Bersabée," *RBibl* 12 (1903) 425.

<sup>5</sup> P. Figueras, "The Roman-Byzantine period" in Y. Grados and E. Stern (edd.), *Beersheba* (Jerusalem 1979) 39-53 (Hebrew).

<sup>6</sup> V. Fritz, "The Roman fortress" in Y. Aharoni (ed.), *Beer Sheba* (Tel Aviv 1972) 9-83.

<sup>7</sup> R. Etingon, "The British Mandate period" in Grados and Stern, *ibid.* (supra n.5) 69-80 and fig.1; B. Z. Kedar, *Looking twice at the land of Israel* (3rd ed., Jerusalem 1992) 40-43.

<sup>8</sup> Etingon (supra n.7) Table 7.

<sup>9</sup> Kedar (supra n.7) 26-37, 40-43.





Netzer & Weiss colour fig.16. Woman representing the season of autumn, from the synagogue mosaic.



Netzer & Weiss colour fig.6. Nilometer at the centre of the Nile festival mosaic.



Netzer & Weiss colour fig.7. A hunting scene in the Nile festival mosaic showing boar devoured by a bear.

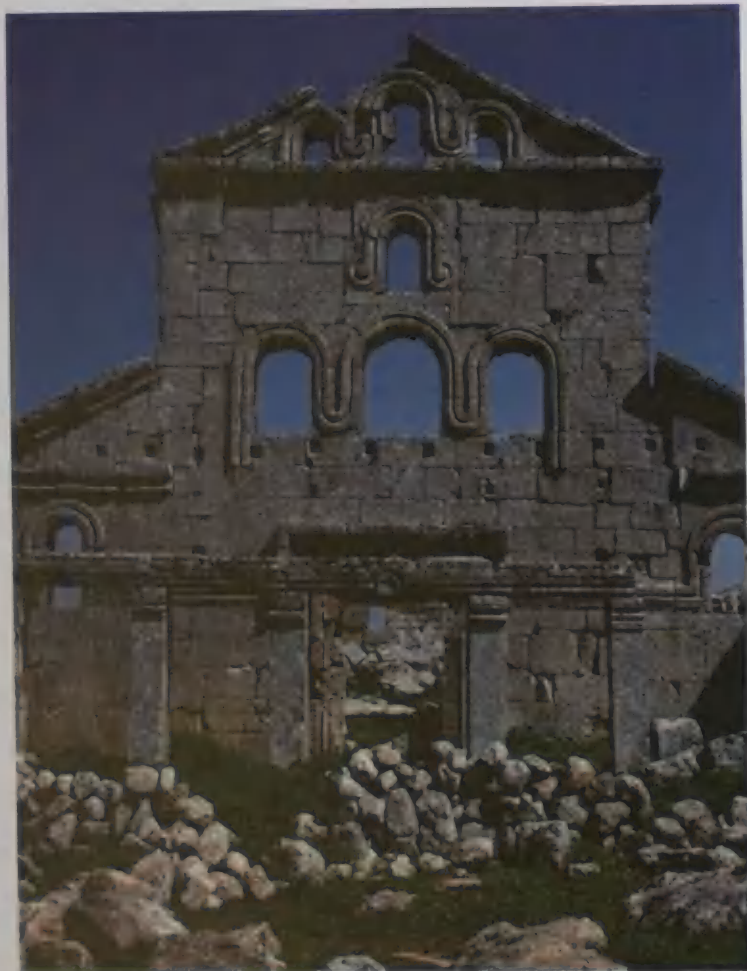


Netzer & Weiss colour fig.11. General view of the building located at the intersection just E of the 'Nile festival' house.





Foss colour fig.1. The village of Qirqbize



Foss colour fig.2. The east church at Baqirha (built in 546)



Foss colour fig.4. House with balcony at Dêhês



Foss colour fig.5. Wine press, Eboda





Foss colour fig.7. Wadi with ancient dams, Kurnub



Foss colour fig.6. The north church, Sobota

## Low-altitude aerial photography at Petra

J. Wilson Myers and Eleanor E. Myers

Having worked for many years documenting archaeological sites around the Mediterranean and Aegean with vertical aerial photographs, our range was extended in 1992 when we were invited to Jordan by four excavators working under the auspices of the American Center of Oriental Research in Amman. One of our study areas was Petra, where great potential was offered by the ruins of the city center. Along the hillsides sloping down to the colonnaded street (280 m long) that runs parallel with the Wadi Musa, excavation has only begun to reveal massive public buildings hidden under the tumbled rubble resulting from earthquakes. We returned in 1993 with support from the U.S. Agency for International Development, at the invitation of Nasri Atalla, Secretary-General of Tourism, to record the city center as an aid to government planning concerned with how best to protect the archaeological resources while also make it safe and more convenient for visitors. The focus of our work was not the well-known façades of tombs carved into the cliffs but the market terraces and larger buildings near the colonnaded street in the city center. Our goal was to make detailed low-level images of the Nabataean through Byzantine city center and eventually, in collaboration with the excavators of the sites, to publish an *Aerial atlas of ancient Jordan*, similar in design and purpose to the *Aerial atlas of ancient Crete* (Berkeley 1992).

A word should be added on why we choose to use a tethered, unmanned photographic balloon for our work. Though vertical photographs from airplanes have long been used to study and map archaeological sites, planes cannot fly low enough to capture, without blurring the image, the details that can be seen from a height ranging from 5 to 200 m above the ground. The operating range of our balloon starts at these low levels, but it also extends up to 800 m, from which it can photograph one square kilometer. While helicopters can hover at low levels, vertical photographs are difficult to make without special camera mounts, and the powerful downwash of the rotor blades can scour and damage fragile archaeological remains.

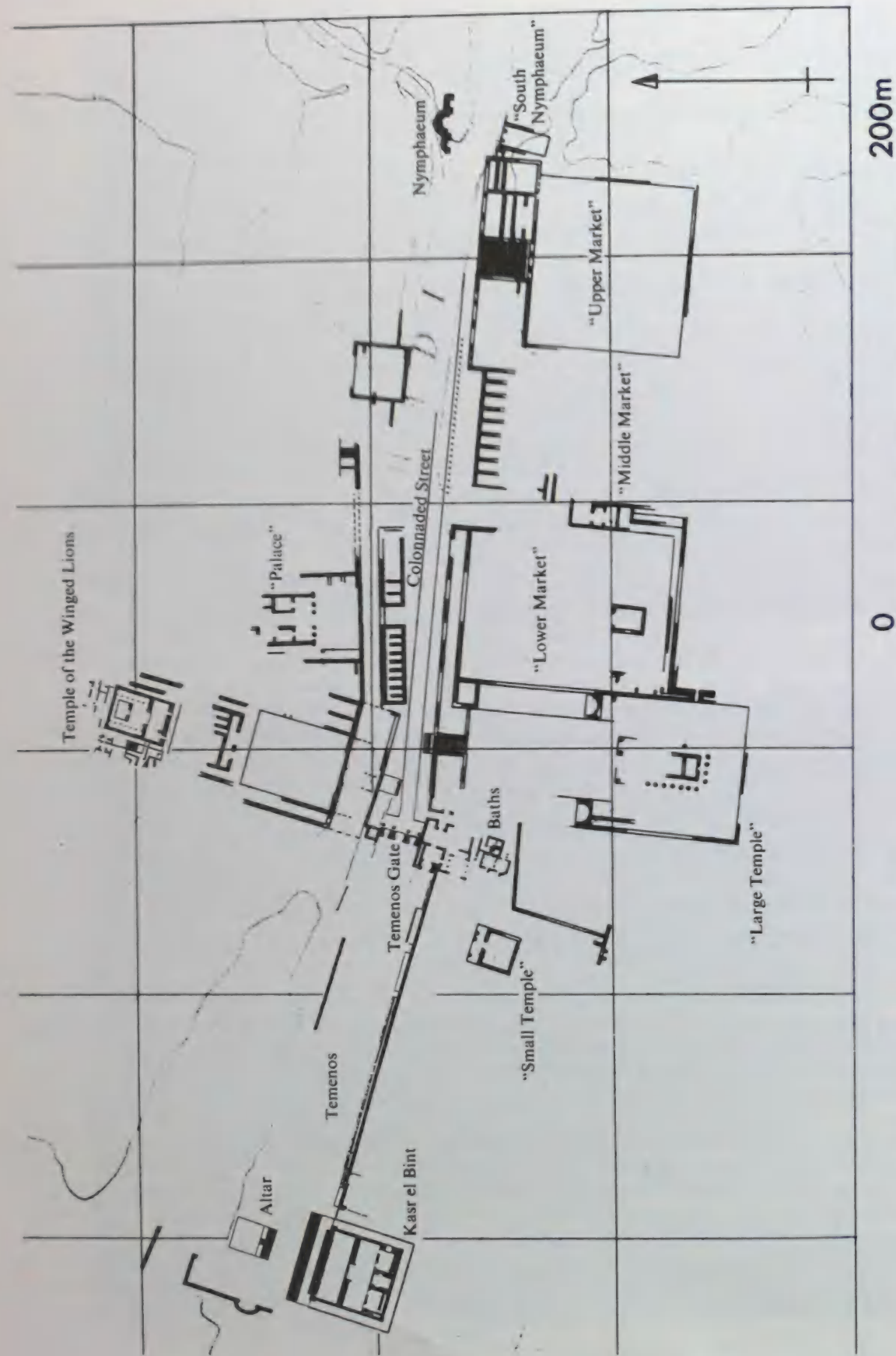
Our equipment consists of a tethered unmanned blimp, 10 m long and 2.5 m in diameter, inflated at the site with hydrogen or helium. A pair of radio-controlled cameras suspended below the blimp are stabilized by the taut tether cord. The cameras, a medium-format Hasselblad ELM/500 and a 35-mm Nikon 2020, are held in a gimbal frame whose two-axis pivots assure true vertical photographs. Though oblique aerial photographs have their uses, vertical views or "photo-plans" made over a relatively level site have no perspective distortion and can be scaled accurately.

When aerial photographs are taken in the raking light of early morning or late afternoon, the combination of highlights and shadows makes archaeological features stand out in clear relief. Complex patterns become easier to understand, and continuities and relationships that go unobserved at ground level may become visible. The state of the archaeological site is recorded and preserved before further excavation and erosion cause irreversible changes.

Though we hope to return to Petra to record continuing excavations at lower altitudes, the illustrations published here demonstrate what can be accomplished with a camera balloon. While information in aerial photographs is best studied in map-sized enlargements as one explores an image for fresh information, even the smaller figures presented here can reward careful study. The ground contours and faint outlines of collapsed and buried structures which are not visible in the bright mid-day sun emerge in the early morning light.

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Myers & Myers fig.1. Plan of city centre = Map 8 in Judith McKenzie, *The architecture of Petra* (British Academy Monographs in Archaeology no.1, Oxford University Press 1990).



Myers & Myers colour fig.1. Petra's city center was built along the slopes that rise N and S of the colonnaded street which runs parallel to the Wadi Musa and leads from the Nymphaeum fountain on the E to the formal gate at the W which opens on to the broad temenos of the Nabataean temple "Qasr el-Bint Faroun" at the foot of the Habis cliff rising 50m' above the ant is the newly discovered Petra Church as it appeared in 1993.





Myers & Myers colour fig. 2. Though the Petra church mosaics show clearly at this stage of the excavation, the atrium to the left (W) is only partly uncovered and adjacent structures along the N wall are barely indicated by returns that vanish into the rubble.



Myers & Myers colour fig. 4. On the N side of the city stands the Temple of the Winged Lions, excavated by P. Hammond. Its associated structures formerly led down to bridge the Wadi and to front the colonnaded street.



Myers & Myers colour fig. 3. View from a lower altitude, showing the roofless temple of "El Bint", the only major building to have resisted the earthquakes. Its altar stands to the N, where crowds could gather in the broad temenos. To the left of the Temple is the dig house (Nazzals Camp) fronted by rows of tent platforms. Just above, high on Habis, is a fortified lookout built by the Crusaders.





Myers & Myers colour fig. 6 (right). In the center, to the S of the Great Temple, stands Az-Zantur, described as a small fortified citadel. Nearby, to upper right, is a substantial Roman house, excavated by R. Stucky of Basel University. To the S a number of trenches suggest the presence of many buildings beneath the tumbled scree on the hillside.



Myers & Myers colour fig. 5 (left). The collapsed column drums of the Great Temple (South Temple) spread out from its heap of fallen stone. Subsequently excavation has been initiated by M. Joukowsky of Brown University who estimates that the temple was about 40 m long and may have stood to a height of 28 m.



Myers & Myers colour fig. 7. The W part of the colonnaded street, starting at the Temenos Gate and passing the stairway (center) and collapsed Propylaea that led up to the Lower Temenos of the Great Temple.



Myers & Myers colour fig. 8. The far E end of the Colonnaded Street, close to the Nymphaeum, showing both the series of small shops and the standing columns that once supported their roof. Missing paving blocks may have been removed by flash floods overflowing from the Wadi Musa.



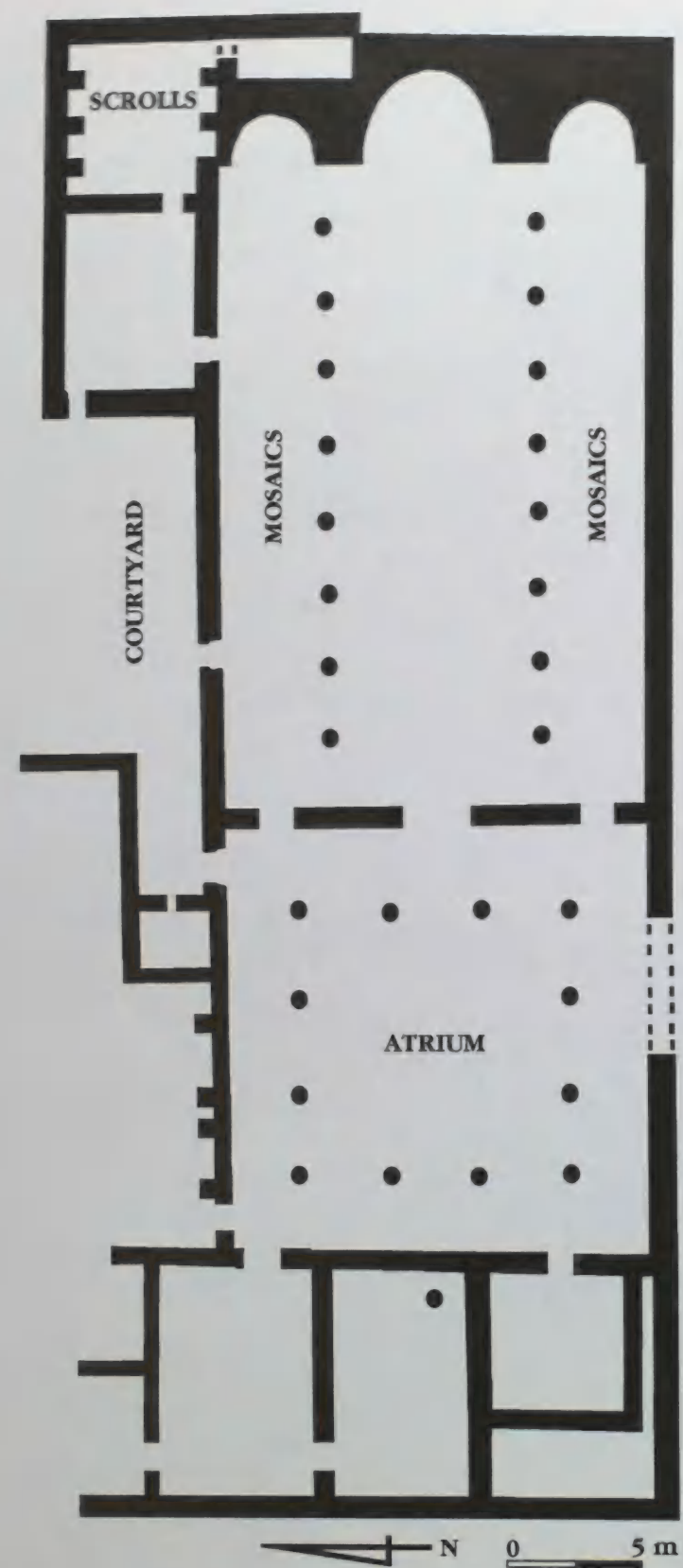


Myers & Myers colour fig. 9. The narrow Siq at upper right leads past a Roman theater cut into the rock face at the point where the gorge opens out. The dark line crossing above the uppermost seats is a drain to divert rainwater that would cascade down the cliffs. Similar gutters were cut by the Nabataeans to protect the carved façades of the tombs.



Petra church colour fig. 1. The aerial view of the church (May 1993). Photo by J.W. Myers and E. Myers.





Petra church fig. 2. Sketch-plan of the excavated part of the church complex (by Zbigniew T. Fiema and Patricia M. Bikai).



Petra church colour fig. 3. Mosaic floor in the north aisle - east end. Photo by Bronwyn Douglas.

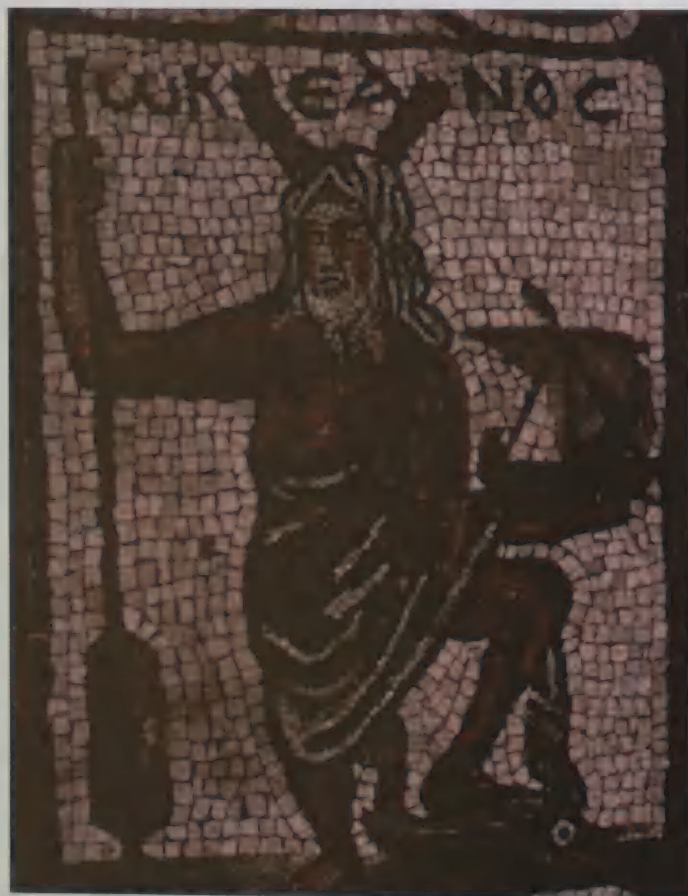


Petra church colour fig. 4. Mosaic floor in the north aisle - central part. Photo by Bronwyn Douglas.





Petra church colour fig. 5. South aisle - the personification of Spring. Photo by Patricia M. Bikai.



Petra church colour fig. 6. South aisle - the personification of Ocean. Photo by Patricia M. Bikai.



Petra church colour fig. 8. South apse and the mosaic floor in the south aisle - east end. Photo by Bronwyn Douglas.



Petra church colour fig. 7. South aisle - fragment of the mosaic floor. Photo by Patricia M. Bikai.





Petra church colour fig. 13. The Scroll Room: excavation of the papyrus scrolls. Photo by Deborah Kooring.



Petra church colour fig. 12. The Scroll Room: lowermost stratum containing carbonized papyrus scrolls and remains of a shelf. Photo Z. T. Fiema.

## The Petra Church project: interim report, 1992-94<sup>1</sup>

Zbigniew T. Fiema, Robert Schick and Khairieh 'Amr

### Introduction

The Petra Church Project is organized by the American Center of Oriental Research in Amman, funded by a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and supported by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Jordan.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the project is to enhance tourism in Petra by excavating and consolidating the church and its mosaics, and to protect them by a shelter over the site. The director of the project, Kenneth W. Russell, who identified the church in 1990, died tragically in May 1992, just as the excavation was to begin. Pierre Bikai, the director of ACOR, then became overall project director. During the first excavation phase, from May 1992 to March 1993, co-directed in the field by the authors of this article, the church proper and a part of the atrium was exposed. In the second phase, from September 1993 to April 1994, directed in the field by Z. T. Fiema, work concentrated in the northern and western rooms and the atrium. Meanwhile, work on consolidating the mosaics has continued. The materials excavated are still undergoing study and the following remarks should be considered preliminary.

The site is located in the heart of the city, E of the Temple of the Winged Lions, on the Jabal Qabr Jumay'an ridge to the N of the Roman road. The Byzantine church is just a part of a larger architectural entity.

### The church proper

The church is a standard triple-apsed basilica. The nave is divided from the aisles by two E-W rows of 8 columns (fig. 1 color). At the E end of the N and S aisles are semicircular apses, while the nave terminates in an elevated *bema* and a larger semicircular apse. The church proper is about 25 m long by 16 m wide. An atrium court is located to the W of the church.

The walls of the church are preserved to a height of 3.5 m in places. Their interior faces display extensively-preserved white plaster. The walls are built with ashlar facing (mostly sandstone), rubble fill, and ash mortar. Some capitals, column drums, and other architectural elements were re-used in the walls (particularly in the N wall). Many of the ashlar blocks are dressed in the typical Nabataean style.

There may have been wooden benches along the N and S walls, for adjacent to them concentrations of charred wood were found. The wall plaster on these walls terminates at a uniform level about 45 cm above the floor, indicating the placement of the benches. These would have been secured by fixtures set in a row of holes in the N and S walls, some 40 cm above the floor and spaced 50-100 cm apart.

<sup>1</sup> This article is an expanded version of the preliminary report which appeared in *ADAJ* 32 (1993) 55-66.

<sup>2</sup> ACOR would like to gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Prince Ra'ad bin Zeid, Chief Chamberlain of the Royal Court, former Ministers of Tourism and Antiquities, Abdul Karim Kabariti and Yanal Hikmat, of the present minister, Mohammed Affash al-Adwan, of the former Secretary-General of the Ministry of Tourism, Nasri Atallah, and of the Director-General of Antiquities, Dr. Safwan Tell.









Fig. 9. North apse - the mosaic floor and remains of marble screen. Photo by Bronwyn Douglas.

#### Phasing

##### *Phases before the construction of the church*

The site saw intensive use in the Nabataean-Roman period. Part of a water channel was found under the floor of the N apse. It continues under the apse's wall into the Scroll Room. Another portion of a channel (perhaps the same one) was found outside the SE corner of the church. There, the channel is associated with an E-W wall showing two phases of use. Beneath the channel was a well-preserved beaten earth floor with exclusively Nabataean sherds embedded in it. Further down, at the level matching the bottom of the foundation trench for the S wall of the church, black-glazed Late Hellenistic pottery was found. Remains of E-W and N-S walls were also found under the floors of the atrium and the nave respectively.

Another well-preserved water channel, in the form of a deep trough, was found below the pavement of the courtyard north of the church proper. It runs N-S and thus probably continued under and across the church's nave and aisles.

##### *Phases of construction and use of the church*

Evidence from the NE corner of the church and from the area E of the N apse suggests that parts of earlier walls were incorporated in the church. Yet it is also clear that the church and atrium were built as an architectural unit.

There is also evidence for several remodelings of the church. A layer of shale rubble containing several shale pavers was found c.15 cm below the mortar bedding for the pavement of the nave. They may be the remains of a first floor, later replaced by the pavement of marble and shale. That remodelling could be associated with the second architectural phase featuring the placement of the marble stylobate slabs upon the original sandstone stylobates.

The existence of an unpatterned mosaic found beneath the S edge of the *bema* and abutting the sandstone stylobate suggests that originally the space in the front of the central apse included a lower and smaller *bema* flanked by that mosaic on its S and N sides. The large raised *bema* that is now extant belongs to the second phase. The marble and sandstone *opus sectile* pavement in the *bema* is at the same level with, and is similar in type to, the original, i.e., pre-synthronon, pavement in the central apse.

The central apse was remodelled at a later date, constituting a third phase, when the 4 *synthronon* rows and a new and higher marble pavement were installed.

##### *The conflagration and the post-church phases*

Sherds of 21 large storage vessels were found mostly above the main level of the charred remains of the wooden superstructure along the S wall of the church. These storage jars may have been placed there after the church went out of use, and were subsequently smashed by an earthquake. Alternatively, these vessels could have been originally stored in the S aisle when the church was still in use, perhaps on the wooden benches along the wall.

While it is not clear whether the church proper and some rooms around had been abandoned beforehand, it is certain that the church suffered a major conflagration. Both aisles were strewn with burnt wooden beams and planks from the ceiling and clerestory. In those layers, iron nails and ceramic roof tiles were abundant. The Scroll Room had been equally affected by fire, but other rooms show little or no traces of it.

The conspicuous absence of a massive ash and charcoal *débris* layer in the nave must be due to human activity in that area after the fire. The layer of ash terminates abruptly at the edge of the nave. Only a minimal amount of ash remained over the mortar bedding of the robbed-out marble pavement of the nave. It is possible that the robbing out of the nave pavement involved first the large-scale removal of the charred *débris* from the nave and its deposition in the side aisles. Perhaps during the same episode of robbing, the entire N half of the *synthronon* was removed. The curved stones of its N half were not found in the tumble layers, suggesting that they had been deliberately removed by the robbers.

A puzzling phenomenon is the large number of sandstone paving slabs found exclusively in the N aisle and the atrium. The slabs were found predominantly above the layer of charred wood, although a few were found almost directly on top of the mosaic floor. The slabs are embedded in layers of destruction *débris* (ash, charcoal, discolored soil) mixed with pockets of pure wind-blown sand. Some were found upright, others lying flat, suggesting a violent cause of deposition. Perhaps these slabs originally formed the roofing of the adjacent rooms or structures, which was thrown by the force of an earthquake. That, however, remains to be confirmed. A major difficulty is their size (average c.60 x 40 x 10 cm) and therefore their weight seems to be somewhat excessive for a pavement of an upper gallery or a roof covering.

The results of the excavation of the northern rooms imply that robbing activities were probably continuous. The Scroll Room presents the best example of this. Numerous fragments of wall mosaics were found among stones of the extensive (c.1m deep) tumble inside the room, and also c.1 m above the pavement level. These pieces of wall mosaics must have derived from the decoration of the semidome over the N apse, and were obviously tossed away by robbers, together with other material from the apse.

The cooking or food-processing and storage installation in the SW corner of the atrium, suggesting a squatter occupation, may have been constructed at that time and have continued even beyond the structural collapse of the church.

##### *Structural destruction*

It is difficult to estimate the length of time that passed between the fire and the structural collapse of the complex. The depth of the deposits between both episodes varies considerably





Fig. 10 Structural collapse evidenced in the southwestern area of the basilica. Photo by Bronwyn Douglas.

throughout the complex, perhaps due to the post-fire human activities. The collapse of the walls and columns is clear throughout the complex, although particularly evident in the church proper (figs. 10, 11). Furthermore, the collapse occurs in two distinct layers in the areas adjacent to the walls of the church. Possibly, the earliest destruction, most reasonably associated with one of Petra's frequent earthquakes, was followed by further minor episodes of destruction and natural deterioration, involving parts of the walls that had survived the initial collapse. In the adjacent rooms, phases of collapse are equally well documented though more difficult to separate.

Some of the collapse was associated with or followed by a fire. Often, fragments of a column drum or a capital show fire-damage while other fragments of the same architectural element lack any traces of fire. Thus, the fire must have occurred after they had collapsed and become scattered. In addition to the already-mentioned occasional scavenging by humans, earthquakes caused considerable redeposition of the material. Fragments of the same architectural member were found in different strata and as far as 15 m apart.

#### Most recent deposits

A crude wall without foundations was found in front of the Southwest Room in the SW corner of the atrium. A second poorly-built wall was constructed in the NE corner of the atrium and a similar construction was found in the area of the northern rooms. All may have served as simple retaining walls.

Within the last century the site has been farmed, and the uniform elevation of the walls in certain areas may be explained as the result of the activity of farmers. The upper, naturally deposited soil layers were much disturbed by the farming activities. Traces of a plough edge were found on a stone c.40 cm below the modern surface. These upper soil layers were generally devoid of finds.

#### Editor's note:

We regret that it was not possible to include a preliminary report on the papyri by Professor L. Koenen in this volume due to the absence of the necessary permissions. A brief note on the discovery, compiled by the editor on the basis of public lectures by Prof. L. Koenen and information given to the Jordan Times (April 15, 1995, p.7) by Dr. Zbigniew Fiema, is provided on this sheet.

The remains of more than 100 papyrus rolls were discovered in a room directly adjacent to the church (see pp.299-300 of this volume and fig.1). About 20 have been opened and found to contain large amounts of continuous text; about 22 others are more fragmentary but contain substantial sections of visible text; another 67 contain at least some words; the remainder of about 23 are negligible, containing only one or two letters on a fragment. The room may strictly belong not to the church itself but to a large older building lying on its N side. The papyri were covered by several feet of dirt and the remains of wood. The heat of a fire had formed a protective layer over many of the papyri. The conservation of the papyri is being undertaken at the American Center in Amman by Professor Frösén of the Finnish Academy and his Finnish colleagues. The task of separating the layers of papyrus is extremely difficult and the study of the documents will take several years. The papyri that were most thoroughly burned are often the most legible.

The papyri belong to one or more private family archives of the Byzantine period. Dates attested in the documents include A.D. 537, 538, 540, 541, 549 and 559. They seem therefore to cover a relatively short period of roughly one generation. The latest date shows that the fire that burned these papyri was not connected with the recorded earthquake of 551. Most of the documents deal with the possession and acquisition of real estate. They include sworn and unsworn agreements on the settlement of property, including dowries, and dealings with the local administration. The papyri mention vineyards, orchards, sown or seed land, dry land (unirrigated), cisterns, streets, houses, apartments, villages, stables, and the city of Petra itself. Land is measured in Roman *iugera*. A Hebrew liquid unit of measure is also mentioned. Some of the names are Aramaic or Nabataean or late proto-Arabic but the texts are Greek, not Nabataean. Personal names are mostly in Latin and Greek, with a few Nabataean. Many names are Christian. The use of Semitic names in a Greek document should be seen as part of the local Nabataean heritage. The properties lie in villages near Petra and in Petra itself. There is also property in a town called Eleutheropolis (possibly Bet Guvrin). There is no reference to livestock. There is an inventory (*hypostasis*) of inherited property and a remainder trust with property going to a church or hospice. There are also accounts and calculations. Some names recur many times. Some individuals mentioned have church functions but it is not likely that the whole archive is directly connected with the church. However, the relatively affluent families featured in the documents may have been important donors to the church or charitable institution. The documents deal with property transfers that are important to the long-term wealth of the families. They may be copies stored for safety in this location away from their private houses.

Roll 10 has been studied most fully to date. It contains about 80 complete lines running continuously and the right-hand side of much of the rest of the roll. It gives the division of inherited property between three brothers, dividing a minimum of 110 *iugera* among themselves. They owned 83 neighbouring fields. A minimum of 193 *iugera* (about 130 acres) was owned by this family in one area, forming quite a respectable farm. Some are leased or farmed by others as free men in the service of the owners. This document will illuminate the function of the city's hinterland. It shows that Petra's hinterland was still a productive countryside in the middle of the 6th c., depending upon traditional methods of water management, and supporting the city's population. Slaves are occasionally mentioned: in one case the woman of a married slave couple operated a threshing floor, probably as her own business. Petra still used its old name of *Hadriana*, and is called Metropolis of the Province *Salutaris Palaestina Tertia*. Offices of the central government continued to function. Petra in the mid 6th c. was still very much part of the Byzantine empire.

Another papyrus, Inv. 6, is a protocol of a meeting at the sick bed of a individual. The roll opens from right to left in 10 columns. It contains 6 versions of the same text. The copies were meant for distribution to those people and institutions with an interest, but they were never cut. After an invocation to Mary it makes arrangements that if the sick person does not recover all of his belongings will be administered by the presbyter of the monastery of the church and by an inspector Theodorus and that the sick man's mother shall be nourished and clothed for the rest of her life. These two trustees are to take care of the mother as long as she lives; thereafter the estate benefits two religious institutions in the city, the monastery of the Church of Aaron (known very close to Petra), and a hospice or hospital of a martyr. This document will be important for students of law. It avoids nominating a single heir and reflects the pressure on Roman law to adapt to the new world of donations to the Christian church.

The scrolls were excavated by conservator Catherine Valentour and Dr. Zbigniew Fiema, assisted by Deborah Kooring and Department of Antiquities Petra Inspector Suleiman Farajat. The excavation was funded by the United States Agency for International Development. The scrolls conservation project has been sponsored and funded by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, ACOR, the University of Helsinki, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland, the Academy of Finland, and the University of Michigan, with other contributions made by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Samuel Kress Foundation, the United States Information Agency, Robert Johnston, R. D. Doidge, J. and J. Durelt, Yarmouk University, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.





Fig. 11. Excavations of the stone tumble in the area of the north apse. Photo by Bronwyn Douglas.

#### Dating

No dedicatory inscriptions were found, and the coins and ceramics studied to date provide only broad dates. The coins from the northern rooms are likely to help in establishing the date for the construction of the church and understanding its position within the whole complex. For the moment, stylistic comparisons suggest an early 6th c. for the church's mosaics, and there is no doubt that some adjacent structures are earlier in date. Possibly, the church was constructed in the later 5th c. and continued as an ecclesiastical structure throughout the first half of the 6th c. The structural collapse may have been due to an earthquake; that of 551 is a likely candidate, although later earthquakes may be also considered. The fire episode and robbing activities would have preceded the main collapse of the church's walls and columns. Squatter occupation continued into the 7th c. and, possibly, later.

#### The archive of papyri

The Scroll Room, adjacent to the church on the NE side, has provided one of the most important finds of the project. The lowermost burnt layer of charcoal and ash in the room contained many (up to 40 or 50) papyrus rolls, completely carbonized. These had probably been placed on a light shelf in the NW corner of the room. That shelf would have burned during the fire and collapsed (figs. 12-13, color). In the same room, a second smaller archive was found in the space between two springers for arches on the S wall. There, two stone shelves were inserted between the springers, and the scrolls presumably were stored on them. The fire burned the papyri and substantially weakened the structure of the stone shelves which collapsed then or afterwards.



Although all are completely carbonized, some scrolls still preserve their original form, c. 30-35 cm wide and c. 7-8 cm in diameter.<sup>4</sup> The scrolls are of a type characteristic of the Byzantine period. They unroll vertically (from top to bottom) rather than horizontally. The texts are in single columns on the inside. The papyrus used is very thin and of high quality. While only a few isolated papyrus fragments have been examined in detail, and only a few scrolls have yet been unwrapped, it seems clear that the scripts can be identified as a cursive Greek "documentary style" typical of the 5th-6th c. The handwriting, ranging from elegant rounded characters to very cursive and heavily ligatured letters, indicates more than one hand involved. The arrangement of the texts on the scrolls indicates that they are more likely personal writings such as letters or contracts, and possibly administrative or legal texts, rather than literary book rolls. One of the recently unrolled scrolls appears totally devoid of any text, suggesting that the archive of the church was still operational when the calamity befell.

Since no papyrus have been found in Petra previously, and historical documentation for Petra and southern Jordan is sparse, the Petra Papyri are expected to provide a wealth of information concerning the Byzantine period in the area.

#### The finds

Almost all the soil from below the generally sterile layers on top was sifted, permitting almost complete recovery of finds. The analysis of the objects has only begun, but a few comments may be made.

#### Metals

Many thousands of iron nails, fasteners, and clamps from the roof construction were found throughout the church; they constitute the majority of the metal finds. A study of their sizes and angles of bend should shed much light on the details of the roof construction. Other iron finds include a grille, the function of which is not yet certain. Excavations in the northern rooms produced a great variety of iron implements, such as hinges, mounts, and latches, which may be related to door fittings. Some iron finds from the Scroll Room may have been fittings for shelves and/or boxes in which papyrus scrolls were stored.

Few copper alloy objects were found, which may indicate that metal liturgical furnishings were removed when the church went out of use. Only a few scraps of chain and some hooks for hanging lamps remained and only one wick holder was found. The metal structural elements of the building, such as brackets, door hinges, and sockets, however, remained, and provide an unusually clear picture of the doors and of other constructional details. Most of the copper-alloy door hinges and sockets were recovered, some found still *in situ*.

One substantial piece of a lead pipe was recovered from the E part of the S aisle, where a concentration of hypocaust tiles was found just above the mosaic floor. Another piece of lead pipe remains in place at the SE corner of the S aisle. The significance of these objects for the phasing of the church has not been determined as yet.

Only a small piece of gold foil was found, and no fragments of any vessels.

#### Ceramics

The foundation levels of the church produced a little pottery, dated up to the late 5th-6th c. Soundings in the SE corner outside the church produced several thousand Nabataean and

Hellenistic sherds but only one complete lamp, a common Nabataean imitation of Broneer type 24.

Overall, many thousands of sherds were recorded, ranging from ubiquitous small Nabataean sherds through types datable to the 5th and 6th c. Only limited amounts of 7th-8th c. sherds have been found. The uppermost levels contained some examples of Late Islamic hand-made pottery, concentrated in the area of the atrium. Along the central and western part of the S aisle, sherds belonging to 21 restorable large storage jars, one small jar and two funnels were found. All the storage jars have the same basic form with 4 handles (fig. 14). They vary in size but the range is not yet known as only 3 jars have been restored. Other concentrations of restorable vessels, mainly jars and cooking pots, were found on or near the floor in the nave, N aisle, and in the northern rooms. The repertoire is generally similar to that of the destruction layers at al-Lejjun dated to 551.<sup>5</sup>

The soundings within the raised *bema* produced sherds of the same types as those found in the main destruction level of the church, indicating that the enlarged *bema* was completed shortly before the destruction of the building.

In the fill within the nave, a few rim sherds belonging to bowls with combed decoration were found. These are closely related to the "Mahesh" ware bowls but may date slightly earlier.<sup>6</sup> Sherds datable to the 7th c. were found in some fill layers within the church but mostly from the excavation of the northern rooms. Many of these belonged to large amphorae. Restorable vessels were also found associated with the installation in the SW corner of the atrium. An "Antioch" jar was found in the Southwest Room.



Fig. 14. One of the large storage jars after restoration. Photo Bronwyn Douglas.

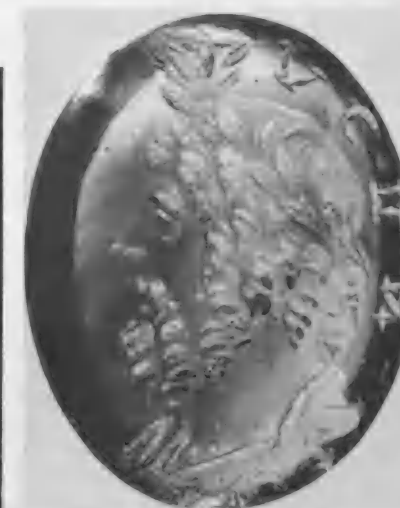


Fig. 16. The amethyst gem. Photo by Bronwyn Douglas.

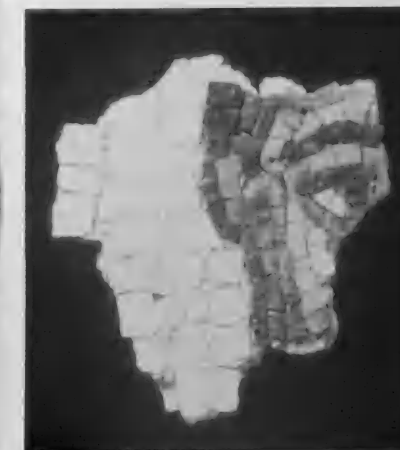


Fig. 17. Fragment of the wall mosaic with a part of a human face. Photo by Bronwyn Douglas.

<sup>4</sup> This information on the nature of the scrolls has been provided by Dr. L. Koenen of the University of Michigan, who made a preliminary examination, and by Dr. Jaakko Frösén of the Finnish Academy, who has begun the process of conservation and analysis. See the following report by L. Koenen.

<sup>5</sup> S. T. Parker, *The Roman frontier in central Jordan*. (BAR S340.ii, Oxford 1987) 542-46, figs. 112-15, 118-20.

<sup>6</sup> D. Whitcomb, "Mahesh ware: evidence of Early Abbasid occupation from southern Jordan," *ADAJ* 33 (1989), figs. 23.



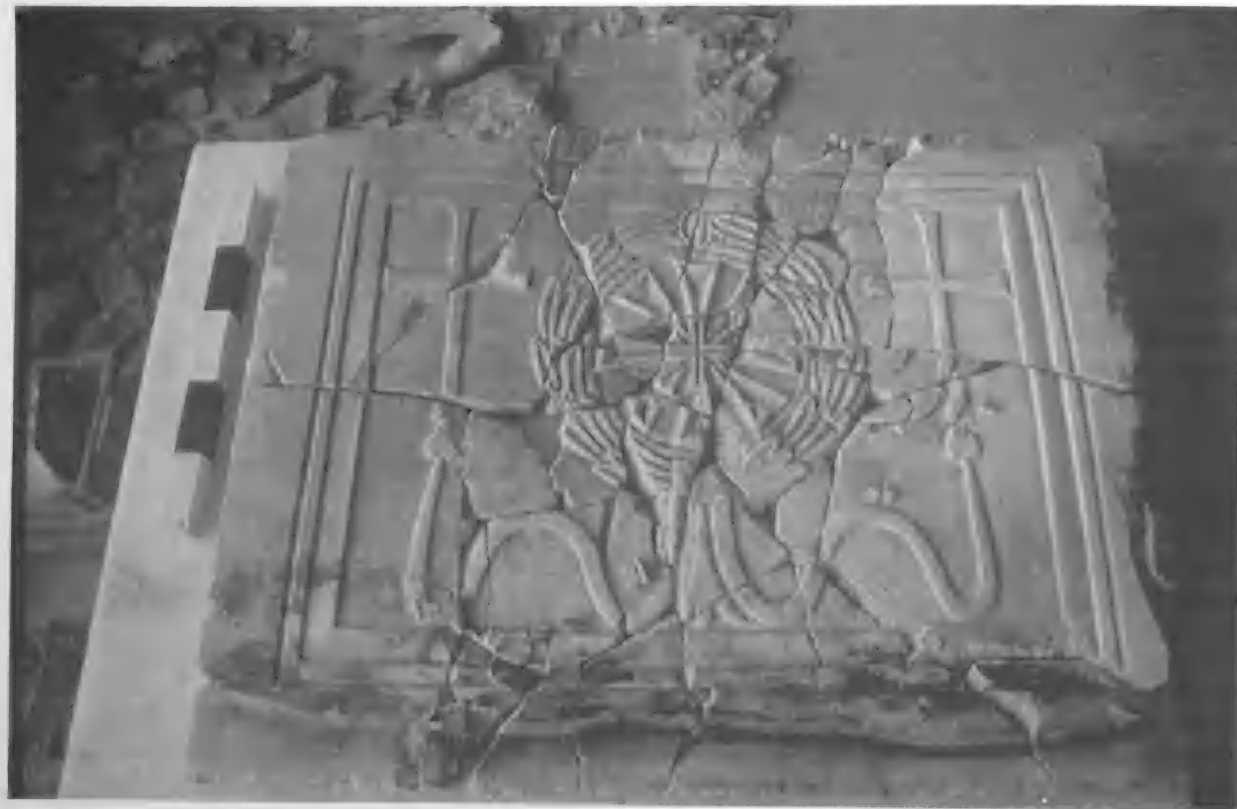


Fig. 15. Marble screen, reconstructed.

#### Marble

More than 4200 pieces of marble were recovered during the excavations. Best preserved are the complete furnishings of the S apse. They consist of a panel, post, two colonnettes, and table. They have been restored and reinstalled in their original position. The identical furnishings of the N apse were less well preserved, while only portions of the badly broken up panels and other furnishings from the *bema* and *ambo* were recovered. Many pieces had clearly been removed in antiquity.

Four panels with the identical design were used in the side apses and the *bema*. The design consists of a central 8-sided cross enclosed by a wreath, with ribbons that curved from the bottom of the wreath, turned up at the lower corners, and terminated in crosses to the sides of the wreath (fig. 15). One open-work lattice screen with a pattern of crosses within circles had been smashed into hundreds of pieces. Hundreds of fragments of the altar table from the *bema* were also found. The broken pieces of a large footed basin with two lion-shaped handles were found along the middle of the stylobate for the S row of columns. Its function remains unclear but it may have been reused in the church. Two other complete marble panels of uncertain function were also found nearby.

Many marble fragments were found during the excavations of the northern rooms. Some fit the broken furnishings from the church proper, suggesting that material from the church proper had been partially redeposited in the northern rooms during robbing operations.

#### Glass

Large numbers of glass fragments have been recovered. They include a number of standard liturgical glass oil lamps, and fragments of window panes. Numerous fragments of molten and twisted glass were found in the lowermost, ashy layer in the Scroll Room, in addition to remains of at least two lamps, smashed by falling stones. Enigmatic small and thin glass rectangles, perhaps inlay pieces, were also found there. Relatively large number of window pane fragments were found in the northern rooms.

#### Stone

Hundreds of stone architectural elements, both Byzantine and reused from earlier period structures were recovered. They include fragments of architraves, cornices, pilaster caps, capitals, reliefs, and mouldings, many of them of high-quality Nabataean or Roman types. Almost one-third of all architectural finds are door jambs, clearly a favorite element for reuse by Byzantine builders.

Several fragments of stone vases and platters as well as small sculptures were also found. An amethyst gem, with the engraved image of Sarapis, was found outside the church's walls, in the deposits pre-dating the construction of the church (fig. 16). This gem is probably dated to the late 1st or early 2nd c.<sup>7</sup>

#### Inscriptions

Other than two pieces of a marble panel with 4 Greek letters, and the labels of the Four Seasons, Ocean, Land, and Wisdom in the mosaic floor of the S aisle, no inscriptions relating to the church were found.

Pre-church inscriptions include a fragmentary Nabataean inscription on a column drum reused in the nave, that dates to the reign of Aretas IV (9 B.C.A.D. 40). A block with the left half of a Greek inscription was placed upside down in the exterior face of the E wall of the church. This seemingly commemorative inscription includes the name of Athemos son of Markianos (Marcianus), and mentions an act of *benefactio*. Another ashlar block, reused in wall construction, shows a badly preserved *tabula ansata* with the Latin letters GERMA [nicus or nus].

A few ostraca written in poorly preserved red ink, either in cursive Greek or Nabataean, are still being studied. Several masons' marks and Nabataean letters were noted on column drums.

#### Coins

Of the coins so far examined, most date to the first half of the 4th c., and belong to the House of Constantine. They provide only a general *terminus post quem* for the church construction. A follis of Tiberius II (578-582) was found in one of the disturbed post-destruction layers. In a similar context was a sesterius of Trajan, commemorating the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom in 106 (ARABIA ADQUISITA). An antoninianus of Gallienus (253-268) was found lying directly upon the stone floor of one of the northern rooms.

#### Wall mosaics and plaster

The 2 E-W rows of arches and the walls of the semidomes above the apses were decorated with mosaics. Thousands of loose stone and glass cubes and many small fragments were recovered. Parts of the border design and portions of human faces can be recognized (fig. 17). Some of the stone cubes were painted red and orange colors that are difficult to produce by firing glass. The fragments are still being processed.

Substantial sections of plain white wall plaster remain on the walls of the church. Only a very few pieces of painted plaster were recovered; they include solid red, yellow, and pale blue; none had any design, except for simple bands.

#### Faunal and floral remains

Substantial quantities of bones were recovered. The bones include many fish bones and a few fragments of ostrich egg shells. A number of intact charred beams were saved for analysis. Soil samples have been taken for flotation.

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<sup>7</sup> Information provided by Dr. Martin Henig of the Institute of Archaeology, Oxford.



## L'organisation liturgique des églises en Palestine et Judée

Jean-Pierre Sodini

YORAM TSAFRIR (éd.), *ANCIENT CHURCHES REVEALED* (Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem 1993). Pp. 358. ISBN 965-221-016-1.

Le recueil de contributions que présente ce livre, que l'Israel Exploration Society publie après le très appréciable *Ancient synagogues revealed*,<sup>1</sup> paraît en même temps que deux publications du *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*,<sup>2</sup> qui soulignent la vitalité de l'archéologie en Israël, où les trouvailles annuelles continuent à affluer à un rythme très soutenu. La Jordanie n'est pas en reste et un superbe livre sur les mosaïques de la région<sup>3</sup> vient de nous le rappeler. Il faudrait ajouter toute l'activité qui se déploie actuellement au Sinai et ne pas oublier le Syrie, où l'archéologie chrétienne est illustrée par plusieurs synthèses, telles de G. Tate sur "Nabatie in the Holy Land" (Paris 1992), de A. Naccache sur le décor des églises de village d'Antiochène (Paris 1992), de P. Donceel-Voûte sur les pavements des églises byzantines de Syrie et du Liban (Louvain-La-Neuve 1988). Il faut y rajouter la publication par J. Balty des mosaïques d'une villa à atrium péristyle de Sarrin en Osroène: *La mosaïque de Sarrin (Osroène)* (Paris 1990). Particulièrement R. et A. Ovadia, *Hellenistic, Roman and early Byzantine mosaic pavements in Israel* (Rome 1987). Cf. dans ce recueil, 71-76, l'article de V. Corbo ("The church of the house of St. Peter at Capernaum") sur l'église de la maison de saint Pierre à Capharnaüm; cf. aussi S. Loffreda, "La tradizionale casa di Simon Pietro a 25 anni dalla sua scoperta," *Early Christianity in context* 37-67.

La richesse du matériel est telle que nous ne pouvons en rendre compte en détail. Nous laisserons de côté, sauf cas particuliers, les mosaïques, pour lesquelles nous disposons des beaux livres de Y. Ovadia,<sup>4</sup> et nous concentrerons nos quelques remarques sur l'organisation liturgique des églises. La première partie du livre présente une introduction ou une esquisse de synthèse sur les églises de Palestine, De Constantin aux Croisés. Le premier article, dû à Y. Tsafir ("The development of ecclesiastical architecture in Palestine," pp.1-16), présente une très utile mise au point sur l'évolution de l'architecture ecclésiastique en Palestine. A Capharnaüm, l'existence, sous l'octogone, d'une *domus ecclesiae* aménagée dans une maison, réputée de Pierre, qui aurait été utilisée entre le I<sup>er</sup> et le IV<sup>e</sup> s. par la communauté judéo-chrétienne de Capharnaüm, reste hypothétique.<sup>5</sup> Il a raison de mettre l'accent sur l'impact des constructions constantiniennes (Anastasis, Eleona, à Jérusalem; Nativité à Bethléem et Mambré près d'Hébron) sur l'architecture de pèlerinage du Proche-Orient. Le développement des cryptes proche-orientales paraît notamment directement dériver de celles des églises de la Nativité et

de l'Eleona, ainsi que le souligne l'auteur. La distinction entre plans basilicaux et plans centrés est commode à condition de ne pas les spécialiser dans des fonctions définies, ce que refuse avec prudence Y. Tsafir ("However not all the churches built around a single center were commemorative", p.14). La liste des plans centrés de Palestine, Transjordanie et Syrie du Sud est abondante. Pour Bosra, il faut y rajouter le grand plan centré découvert à Bosra par la mission de J.-M. Dentzer.<sup>10</sup> L'église ronde de Beth-Shean pose un problème de couverture et on a pu suggérer que l'espace central était découvert.<sup>11</sup> Enfin l'importance des plans centrés est manifeste également en Syrie du Nord. La cathédrale d'Antioche, construite par Constantin, avait un plan centré, sans aucun doute octogonal, et, sous l'influence de ce modèle, d'autres villes de Syrie du Nord requrent des édifices similaires.

Originale est l'approche de J. Wilkinson ("Christian worship in the Byzantine period," 17-22) qui, en examinant la liturgie paléochrétienne, essaie d'établir des rapports entre le culte juif et le culte chrétien ainsi qu'entre le symbolisme de ces deux cultes. Certains autres aspects auraient peut-être dû être mis en exergue comme ces diaconica-baptistères attestés au Liban, en Jordanie et en Palestine.<sup>12</sup> Il revient aussi dans une courte notice ("Constantinian churches in Palestine," 23-27) sur les églises constantiniennes de Palestine, cherchant là aussi à montrer les rapports et les différences avec les édifices de culte juif et notamment le plus glorieux d'entre eux, le temple de Jérusalem. Je ne sais que penser de certains de ses rapprochements (26), qui paraissent trop beaux pour être vrais entre l'Eleona et le Temple de Jérusalem (identité des proportions?), ou entre le Temple et l'église de la Nativité (un carré de mosaïque dans la nef centrale de cet édifice correspond exactement à l'emplacement du Saint des Saints).

L'étude de Denys Pringle ("Churches in the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem [1099-1291]," 28-39) sur les églises des Croisés à Jérusalem, qui résume le corpus entrepris par cet auteur,<sup>13</sup> montre l'éclat de la construction religieuse à cette époque (200 constructions attestées archéologiquement; somme doublée si l'on y inclut les monuments connus par les sources écrites). L'auteur y distingue les églises de paroisse, celles de diocèse et les monastères. Sa conclusion est qu'elle est restée un corps étranger en Terre Sainte. "Elle serait à sa place en France du Sud. Seule différence, l'usage constant des arcs d'ogive et la présence fréquente d'une coupole sur pendentifs pour couvrir l'intersection de la nef et des transepts" (39). Toutefois, cette architecture n'est pas restée sans influence sur la sculpture d'Italie du Sud lors du repli des Croisés, sur celle du Royaume de Chypre (même si cette influence reste difficile à préciser), voire — ce qui serait plus intéressant — sur l'architecture ayyoubide et mamelouke.

Suit ensuite une étude régionale parcourant allant du Nord au Sud. Pour la Galilée, sont évoquées successivement la ferme ecclésiastique de Shelomi (C. Dauphin, "A Byzantine ecclesiastical farm at Shelomi," 43-48), les églises de Nahariya (C. Dauphin, "The Byzantine church at Nahariya," 49-53), d'Horvat Hesheq (M. Aviam, "Horvat Hesheq: a church in Upper Galilee," 54-65 et L. di Segni, "The Greek inscriptions at Horvat Hesheq," 66-70) et de Capharnaüm (V. Corbo, "The church of the house of St. Peter at Capernaum," 71-76) ainsi que celle de Kursi (V. Tzaferis, "The Early Christian monastery at Kursi," 77-79). L'église Saint-Georges d'Horvat Hesheq (apparemment achevée en 519, d'après une inscription en mosaïque de la nef centrale) étant la moins connue d'entre elles, malgré les articles des mêmes auteurs parus dans *Christian archaeology in the Holy Land* (351-90), je vais rapidement en souligner l'intérêt pour les installations liturgiques. Le sanctuaire était triple, mais l'on ne connaît pas, en raison

<sup>1</sup> L. I. Levine (éd.), *Ancient synagogues revealed* (Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem 1989).

<sup>2</sup> G. C. Bottini, L. Di Segni, E. Alliata (éd.), *Christian archaeology in the Holy Land. New discoveries* (V. Corbo volume) (Jerusalem 1990) et F. Manns, E. Alliata (éd.), *Early Christianity in context. Monuments and documents* (Jerusalem 1993).

<sup>3</sup> M. Piccirillo, *The mosaics of Jordan* (Amman 1993).

<sup>4</sup> G. Tate, *Les campagnes de la Syrie du Nord du II<sup>e</sup> au VII<sup>e</sup> s.*, tome I (Paris 1992), qui a fait l'objet d'une longue recension de C. Foss (pp.213 ff.).

<sup>5</sup> C. Strube, *Baudekoration im nordsyrischen Kalksteinmassiv*, Bd I. Kapitell-, Tür- und Gesimsformen der Kirchen des 4. und 5. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. (Mainz 1993).

<sup>6</sup> A. Naccache, *Le décor des églises de village d'Antiochène* (Paris 1992).

<sup>7</sup> P. Donceel-Voûte, *Les pavements des églises byzantines de Syrie et du Liban* (Louvain-La-Neuve 1988). Il faut y rajouter la publication par J. Balty des mosaïques d'une villa à atrium péristyle de Sarrin en Osroène: *La mosaïque de Sarrin (Osroène)* (Paris 1990).

<sup>8</sup> Particulièrement R. et A. Ovadia, *Hellenistic, Roman and early Byzantine mosaic pavements in Israel* (Rome 1987).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. dans ce recueil, 71-76, l'article de V. Corbo ("The church of the house of St. Peter at Capernaum") sur l'église de la maison de saint Pierre à Capharnaüm; cf. aussi S. Loffreda, "La tradizionale casa di Simon Pietro a 25 anni dalla sua scoperta," *Early Christianity in context* 37-67.

<sup>10</sup> J.-M. Dentzer, "Fouilles franco-syriennes à l'est de l'arc nabatéen (1985-1987): une nouvelle cathédrale à Bosra," *Corsi di Cultura* 35 (1988) 13-34.

<sup>11</sup> R. Arav, "The round church at Beth-Shan," *LibAnn* 39 (1989) 189-98.

<sup>12</sup> On trouvera quelques remarques sur eux dans Donceel-Voûte (supra n.7) 529 n. 47 et quelques compléments dans ma recension sur ce livre dans *BullAIEMA* 14 (1993) 286.

<sup>13</sup> *The churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: a corpus* (Cambridge, en cours de publication: le vol. I est paru en 1993).



de l'inachèvement de la fouille, l'organisation de la chapelle nord. Dans la chapelle sud, en revanche, on a retrouvé le socle d'une table avec les cavités pour l'encastrement des quatre pieds et une cavité médiane que le fouilleur interprète comme un reliquaire alors qu'il ne s'agit peut-être que de la cavité (30 x 25 x 15) qui contenait ce qu'il appelle "le reliquaire portable" (27 x 17 x 12) trouvé dans la nef centrale. Au-dessus, le couvercle, qui devait recouvrir le reliquaire présent (mais ses dimensions ne sont pas données, ce qui interdit toute vérification), comme pour le reliquaire d'En Hanniya (fig. p.5). Au milieu de chacune de ses faces, des crampons en fer permettaient de l'assujettir aux rebords du socle (photo de ce dernier montrant les restes d'agrafe dans *Christian archaeology in the Holy Land* p.381). La caractéristique essentielle de ce couvercle est le trou d'alimentation aménagé en son milieu. Il correspondrait au conduit de bronze trouvé dans le reliquaire, ce qui fournit un argument supplémentaire à mon hypothèse. Complet, l'ensemble devait ressembler au reliquaire de l'église Saint-Basile de Rihab (photo donnée également p.5). A ces exemples, il faut maintenant ajouter le très intéressant reliquaire à trois compartiments et à circulation d'huile découvert par M. Piccirillo à Um al-Rasas.<sup>14</sup> Le sanctuaire de la nef centrale offrait un socle comparable, malheureusement détruit dans sa partie droite, avec quatre cavités dans les angles pour les pieds de la table et une cavité centrale pour un reliquaire. Comme à Nahariya (et dans une phase de l'église de Shavei Zion), ont été retrouvés les encastresments de pieds de table contre la clôture du sanctuaire, de part et d'autre de l'entrée du sanctuaire. Toutefois, on a également retrouvé les plateaux de ces tables, en calcaire local. On est donc sûr, cette fois, que les encastresments correspondent bien à des tables secondaires et non à des lutrins, contrairement à l'hypothèse émise par P. Donceel-Voûte.<sup>15</sup> Les plaques de parapet et de clôture de sanctuaire sont également remarquables dans cette église car elles présentent ce mélange caractéristique de la région entre dalles de calcaire et de marbre, ces dernières dans le style si particulier de la Transjordanie et de la Palestine.<sup>16</sup> Enfin, trois chapiteaux à un seul rang d'acanthé taillés dans un fût monolithe de 18 cm de diamètre permettent de supposer l'existence d'un ciborium dont ni la forme au sol (base carrée ou rectangulaire), ni le couronnement (pourquoi restituer un fastigium plat, comme sur la fig. p.64?) ne sont assurés.

La Samarie est représentée par deux articles, l'un de Y. Magen ("The church of Mary the Theotokos on Mt. Gerizim," 83-89) sur l'église de la Vierge du Mont Garizim, où il résume les recherches qu'il a publiées ailleurs,<sup>17</sup> l'autre de C. Dauphin, sur l'église de Dor ("Dora-Dor: a station for pilgrims in the Byzantine period on their way to Jerusalem," 90-97).

Le chapitre sur Jérusalem est l'un des plus riches du livre. Il s'ouvre par une mise au point claire de J. Patrich ("The early Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the light of excavations and restoration," 101-17) sur l'église du saint Sépulcre à la lumière des travaux de Ch. Coüasnon et V. Corbo. Il dresse un inventaire précis de leurs divergences concernant les parties de ce complexe et cette mise au point est la bienvenue pour de futures recherches sur le site. On peut,

<sup>14</sup> M. Piccirillo, "La chiesa del prete Wa'il à Um al-Rasas — Kastron Mefaa, Giordania," *Early Christianity in context* 313-14 notamment fig. 18 à 21, pp.320-21: curieusement le reliquaire (ainsi que le reste d'un autre) ne semble pas avoir été placé sous l'autel mais dans l'une des deux niches aménagées à l'extrémité est de la nef nord.

<sup>15</sup> Donceel-Voûte (supra n.7) 150-51 et mes remarques dans *Bull. AIEMA* 14(1993) 285.

<sup>16</sup> Sur ces sculptures, l'étude de base reste encore celle d'E. Russo, "La scultura del VI secolo in Palestina. Considerazioni e proposte," *AAAH* VI (1987) 113-248.

<sup>17</sup> "The Church of Mary Theotokos on Mount Gerizim," *Christian archaeology in the Holy Land* 333-342 et "Mount Gerizim and the Samaritans," *Early Christianity in context* 91-148. On notera qu'une enceinte comparable se trouve dans la prétendue synagogue de Bet Yerah dont R. Reich a récemment montré qu'il s'agissait d'une église: "The Bet Yerah 'synagogue' reconsidered," *Atiqot* 22 (1993) 137-44.

sur le baptistère, verser au dossier l'article d'A. J. Wharton.<sup>18</sup> Le bilan des travaux à l'Anastasis est complété par une courte notice de M. Broshi sur les fouilles menées dans la chapelle de saint Vartan et des martyrs arméniens ("Excavations in the Holy Sepulchre in the Chapel of St. Vartan and the Armenian martyrs," 118-22). Une bonne mise au point sur la Nea, assurée par N. Avigad ("The Nea: Justinian's Church of St. Mary, Mother of God, discovered in the Old City of Jerusalem," 128-35) figure aussi dans ce chapitre. Dans le grand nombre des découvertes récentes, deux, aux environs de Jérusalem, me semblent enrichir ce panorama.<sup>19</sup> Enfin pas moins de trois articles sont consacrés aux monuments croisés de Jérusalem: un de Dan Bahat sur les églises croisées récemment découvertes à Jérusalem ("Recently-discovered Crusader churches in Jerusalem," 123-27); un autre d'A. Ovadia sur une église croisée dans le quartier juif du Vieux Jérusalem ("A Crusader church in the Jewish quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem," 136-39); le dernier de M. Ben Dov sur la restauration de l'église de la Vierge des chevaliers teutoniques ("The restoration of St. Mary's church of the German Knights in Jerusalem," 140-42). Une note de V. Tzaferis ("The monastery of the Cross in Jerusalem," 143-46) sur le monastère géorgien de la Croix, restauré dans les années 1970, donne des aperçus intéressants sur l'état du site à l'époque justinienne, puis aux XIe-XIVe s. et laisse entrevoir une prochaine publication des découvertes faites dans ce site.

Avec les églises et les monastères de Judée, ce sont les résultats passionnants des travaux de Y. Hirschfeld et de J. Patrich qui sont rapidement présentés. Y. Hirschfeld résume brièvement les conclusions présentées dans son livre.<sup>20</sup> Il a su donner vie à la distinction entre laures et coenobia. Pour les premières, J. Patrich<sup>21</sup> ("Chapels and hermitages of St. Sabas monastery," 233-43) donne un aperçu de la Laure-mère de saint Sabas et de 45 hermitages qui en dépendaient et qu'il a étudiés en détail. Il s'attarde notamment sur l'hermitage n° 29, attribué selon la tradition locale à Jean l'Hésychaste dont Cyrille de Scythopolis nous a conservé la vie. Deux coupes (240) permettent de comprendre l'organisation de la vie matérielle et religieuse de l'ascète. Deux coenobia sont aussi présentés en détail. L'un est logé dans un escarpement et nécessite l'aménagement des grottes naturelles, à Khirbet ed-Deir (Y. Hirschfeld, "The cave-church at Khirbet ed-Deir," 244-58). Malgré les difficultés du site, tous les bâtiments nécessaires à la vie d'un couvent (église et chapelle, tombeau collectif et tombe du fondateur, réfectoire, habitation collective, citernes et fours, tour et porterie) ont pu être implantés. Aménagée dans une grotte, l'église avait reçu un pavement de mosaïque, un autel et quelques placages en marbre. A l'opposé, le monastère de Martyrius (Y. Magen, "The monastery of St. Martyrius at Ma'ale Adummim," 170-96), installé sur une colline spacieuse sur la route Jéricho-Jérusalem, a bénéficié pour son implantation de tout l'espace nécessaire. Les installations sont amples, clairement dessinées, et bien individualisées d'autant qu'en dépit du pillage des

<sup>18</sup> A. J. Wharton, "The baptistery of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and the politics of sacred landscapes," *DOP* 46 (1992) 313-26.

<sup>19</sup> Y. Hirschfeld, "A church and water reservoir built by empress Eudocia," *LibAnn* 40 (1990) 287-94; R. Arav, L. Di Segni, A. Kloner, "An eighth century monastery near Jerusalem," *LibAnn* 40 (1990) 313-20.

<sup>20</sup> Y. Hirschfeld, *The Judean desert monasteries in the Byzantine period* (New Haven 1992). Il y revient dans différents articles y compris dans *Christian archaeology in the Holy Land* ("List of the Byzantine monasteries in the Judean desert," 1-90) et *Early Christianity in context* ("Holy sites in the vicinity of the Monastery of Chariton," 297-311).

<sup>21</sup> Son livre fondamental sur les institutions monastiques de saint Sabas est en cours de publication. Cf aussi ses contributions sur des sites monastiques dans *Christian archaeology in the Holy Land* ("The cells (ta kellia) of Choziba, Wadi el-Qilt," 205-26), dans *LibAnn* 40 (1990) ("The Sabaite laura of Jeremias in the Judean desert," 295-311) et 41 (1991) ("The Sabaite monastery in the cave (spelaeon) in the Judean desert," 429-48) ainsi que dans *Early Christianity in context* (J. Patrich, B. Arubas, B. Agur, "Monastic cells in the desert of Gerasimos near the Jordan," 277-96).



pierres, des tuiles, et d'autres matériaux, la chance a relativement bien préservé les structures et une grande partie du mobilier. C'est sans doute le monastère protobyzantin le mieux conservé.

Quelques églises de Judée sont aussi présentées. Celle de l'Apparition de l'Ange aux Bergers (V. Tzaferis, "The Early Christian holy site at Shepherds' Field," 204-6), qui complétait le circuit de pèlerinage à faire autour de Béthléem, est intéressante. Dès le début du Ve s., l'église était à double niveau, un niveau enterré, celui de la grotte des bergers, et un niveau supérieur, où se dressait une chapelle commémorative. Au VIe s., celle-ci est reconstruite, agrandie et luxueusement ornée (des colonnes de marbres avec chapiteaux corinthiens séparent les nefs), cependant que l'église inférieure devient purement funéraire. L'église de Horvat Berachot (Y. Tsafir et Y. Hirschfeld, "The Byzantine church at Horvat Berachot," 207-18) avec sa crypte accessible par deux escaliers à partir des nefs latérales recevait également beaucoup de pèlerins, encore que la relique vénérée soit inconnue. D'autres églises semblent avoir simplement desservi des communautés. Celle de Khirbet al-Beiyûdât (H. Hizmi, "The Byzantine church at Khirbet el-Beiyûdât in the lower Jordan valley," 155-63; L. di Segni, "The inscriptions at Khirbet el-Beiyûdât," 164-69), dans la vallée inférieure du Jourdain, est une basilique à trois nefs avec les accès principaux au Sud, comme le montre le tapis de mosaïque au milieu de la nef Sud qui empiète largement sur l'entrecolonnement entre cette nef et la nef centrale. Le sanctuaire, bien conservé, préserve les restes d'un ciborium (avec toujours la restitution d'un couronnement plat!) et d'un ambon au Nord, comme de coutume en Palestine I. Dispositif rare, à côté de l'ambon, un tronc de colonne de 50 cm de diamètre au pied duquel on a trouvé, renversée, une coupe en pierre à deux anses. La nef sud était flanquée de deux annexes. Celle de l'Ouest préserve l'implantation de trois pieds, sur lesquels les fouilleurs restituent un plateau carré placé en diagonale. Ce dispositif me semble un peu saugrenu et je suggérerais plutôt d'y placer une table en sigma. Il est dommage que nous n'ayons aucun reste de plateau pour nous permettre de trancher. Les trois églises fouillées à Hérodion (E. Netzer, R. Birger-Calderon, A. Feller, "The churches of Herodion," 219-32)<sup>22</sup> ont un aspect plus modeste et rappellent des églises de village de Judée ou de Transjordanie. Mentionnons l'existence, durant l'une des phases du bâtiment, d'un ambon au Nord (normal pour les provinces de Palestine) dans l'église nord dont le sanctuaire tripartite rectiligne, rare en Palestine, est fréquent en Syrie du Nord, comme le soulignent les auteurs.

Enfin, G. Kühnel<sup>23</sup> consacre une brève note ("The twelfth-century decoration of the Church of the Nativity: eastern and western concord," 197-203) à l'église de la Nativité, dont les phases post-constantiniennes restent mal datées, en mettant l'accent sur le décor du XIIe s. fait sous le patronage de Manuel Comnène, d'Amaury Ier et de l'évêque Raoul de Béthléem. Cette collaboration étroite se retrouve dans l'éclectisme du programme et du style du décor. L'arbre de Jessé doit témoigner de l'influence occidentale en ce milieu du XIIe siècle, comme c'est aussi le cas au Monastère de la Peribleptos dans le quartier de Psamatia à Constantinople.<sup>24</sup> La découverte dans les nettoyages récents des mosaïques de la Nativité d'une signature en syriaque (*Basile diacre*) d'un artiste qui a aussi signé en latin (*Basilius pictor*) montre la part des artistes locaux dans cet atelier byzantino-latin de l'époque des croisades.

La région de la Judée du Sud et du Negev a été aussi extrêmement riche en découvertes. Passons sur la basilique de Maresha (Beit Govrin) (A. Kloner, "A Byzantine church at Maresha [Beit Govrin]," 261-64), mal conservée notamment dans sa partie orientale. Le monastère

<sup>22</sup> Cf., sur les proportions des églises d'Hérodion, D. Milson, "Byzantine architects in Herodium", *LibAnn* 39 (1989) 207-12.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. aussi G. Kühnel, *Wall painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Berlin 1988); L.-A. Hunt, "Art and colonialism", *DOP* 45 (1991) 69-85; B. Kühnel, *Crusader art of the twelfth century: a geographical, an historical or an art-historical notion?* (Berlin 1994).

<sup>24</sup> C. Mango, "The monastery of St. Mary the Peribleptos (Sulu Manastir) at Constantinople revisited," *Revue des Etudes Arméniennes* 23 (1992) 473-88.

d'Horvat Beit Loya (Khirbet Lehi) (J. Patrich et Y. Tsafir, "A Byzantine church complex at Horvat Beit Loya," 265-72) présente des installations agricoles (pressoir à vin et pressoir à olive), une basilique, des annexes liturgiques (dont un baptistère) bien conservées. Du sanctuaire ne subsistent qu'une base et des fragments de colonne en marbre. Les mosaïques, d'une iconographie très riche, ont vu leurs représentations humaines et animalières effacées, comme bon nombre d'autres mosaïques de la région et de Transjordanie, ce phénomène de censure étant mis en relation avec le fameux édit de Yazid de 721 au demeurant mal connu et dont l'existence même a pu être contestée. Autre basilique avec de superbes mosaïques, celle de Saint-Etienne à Horvat Be'er-shem'a au Sud de Magen (D. Gazit et Y. Lender, "The Church of St. Stephen at Horvat Be'er-shem'a," 273-76). Elles décoraient la nef centrale, le sanctuaire et ses deux annexes, le baptistère. Parmi les représentations humaines figurant dans le rinceau habité qui tapisse la nef centrale, on remarque celle de Victor, un donateur tenant un filet à la main, connu par une inscription (dont ni le texte ni la transcription ne sont donnés) dans la sacristie Sud comme étant le gardien de l'église. Le sanctuaire possédait les restes d'un autel bâti en pierre et plaqué de marbre. La base hexagonale d'un ambon polygonal a été découverte dans l'angle nord-est de la nef centrale, ce qui correspond à l'emplacement attendu en Palestine III.<sup>25</sup> Dans les deux annexes flanquant le sanctuaire, les restes d'un dispositif hexagonal de 0,50 x 0,50 m ont été dégagés que les fouilleurs interprètent comme des reliquaires. Faute de photos et de dessins, nous ne pouvons pas comprendre exactement leur mise en place. L'église de Kissufim (R. Cohen, "A Byzantine church and its mosaic floors at Kissufim," 277-82), dont seule la moitié occidentale a été dégagée, offre des mosaïques bien connues<sup>26</sup> mais qui, faute d'être complètes (seuls la nef nord et quelques entrecolonnements ont été dégagés), posent certains problèmes d'interprétation. Le pavement de la nef centrale a été posé en 576 au moment où Théodore était diacre, paramonarios (sacristain) et abbé (higoumène) du couvent de Saint-Elie, dont notre église devait donc faire partie. Deux ans plus tard, en 578, comme l'indique une inscription placée dans le premier entrecolonnement occidental entre nef centrale et nef nord, sous le même higoumène, a été achevée la mosaïque "admirable" de l'*embolos*, c'est à dire de la nef latérale nord. Dans ce cas, l'adjectif convient bien aux mosaïques. Au lieu du tapis couvrant attendu, comme il est de règle dans les nefs latérales, on est en présence d'une succession de panneaux représentant des animaux se faisant face pacifiquement, se combattant ou affrontés à des chasseurs. Au-dessus de l'un de ceux-ci, l'inscription "Ergon Alexandrou" peut être interprétée comme la légende d'une chasse héroïque du grand Alexandre, comme le suggère R. Cohen, ou comme la signature, sous une forme un peu rare, il est vrai, du mosaïste.<sup>27</sup> Cette seconde hypothèse me paraît aussi vraisemblable que la première tant l'exécution du pavement est exceptionnelle. Une tombe fermée de dalles de marbre et contenant cinq squelettes interrompait la mosaïque. Elle était entourée par une inscription en mosaïque indiquant qu'il s'agissait de la tombe du prêtre Zonaios, si bien que tombe et mosaïque de la nef semblent contemporaines. Dans l'entrecolonnement qui jouxte cette tombe, contigu à l'inscription, un panneau représente une riche donatrice, Dame Silthous, donnant 15 pièces, tandis qu'à sa gauche, un second personnage féminin, appelé KALE ORA (allégorie du "bon moment", de la "belle occasion"?), tient, peut-être pour les recevoir, un récipient de forme fermée dont le large col a son embouchure cernée par la sculpture d'une

<sup>25</sup> Cf. quelques indications dans J.-P. Sodini, "L'ambon dans l'église primitive," *La maison-Dieu* 193 (1993) 45 et *Bull. AIEMA* 14 (1993) 281.

<sup>26</sup> L'auteur aurait pu citer l'article fondamental d'A. Ovadia et de S. Mucznik, "The mosaic pavement of Kissufim, Israel," *Mosaïque. Recueil d'hommages à H. Stern* (Paris 1983) 273-80.

<sup>27</sup> C'était déjà la conclusion d'A. Ovadia et de S. Mucznik (supra n.26). Tout en admettant que l'expression *ergon tou* est attestée comme signature de mosaïstes, C. Balmelle et J.-P. Darmon y voient la désignation de l'un des exploits de chasse d'Alexandre: "L'artisan-mosaïste dans l'antiquité tardive," dans X. Barral (éd.), *Artistes, artisans et production artistique au Moyen Age I* (Paris 1986) 235-53. Sur *embolos* = *stoa* = nef latérale, D. Feissel, "Notes d'épigraphie chrétienne IX," *BCH* 118 (1994) 288-90.



volaille disposée sur le marli comme sur un plat. Sans vouloir tout expliquer, on peut suggérer que la Dame Silthous est une généreuse donatrice de la mosaïque, qui a sans doute donné 15 *nomismata*, soit une somme importante eu égard aux dons habituels faits dans le cadre d'une collecte auprès de plusieurs donateurs.<sup>28</sup> Le chamelier Orbikon, dans l'entrecolonnement suivant, est sans doute lui aussi un contributeur. Le reste des entrecolonnements manque, mais l'on est frappé par le caractère exceptionnel des mosaïques qui sont conservés dans ces emplacements. Les quelques panneaux symétriques conservés entre la nef Sud et la nef centrale, à deux ans près leurs contemporains, sont simplement géométriques et correspondent au décor normal de ces parties peu en vue dans les pavements. Une notice rapide de V. Tzaferis ("Early churches at Magen," 283-85) rappelle les particularités du complexe de Magen. A. Negev ("The cathedral at Haluza [Elusa]," 285-93) revient sur la cathédrale d'Elousa, longue de 100 m si on y inclut l'atrium. Il insiste sur le développement du sanctuaire, montrant l'addition dans une seconde phase d'absides à l'intérieur des sacristies d'autel primitives et la mise en place au Sud d'une tableau enclose sur ces quatre côtés par une varrière et qui aurait porté un reliquaire ouvert. La présence d'un reliquaire placé de manière permanente au sommet d'une table est une rareté et demanderait à être démontrée archéologiquement, ce qui semble difficile. Parmi les autres dispositifs liturgiques, installés dès la première phase de cette église, relevons un podium accessible par 6 marches au centre de l'abside, des banquettes latérales de part et d'autre de l'autel et un ambon, normalement décentré vers le Nord. La dernière étude sur le Negev est consacrée par Y. Tsafrir à Rehovot ("The early Byzantine town of Rehovot-in-the-Negev and its churches," 294-302), florissante à l'époque protobyzantine mais abandonnée peu après 700. De cette époque datent quatre églises. L'église centrale, dont la fouille n'est pas encore achevée, possède une abside centrale flanquée de deux sacristies. Elle a eu deux phases principales dont la seconde est datée des années 550-551 ou 554-555. Le sanctuaire de la deuxième phase est bien conservé avec son synthronon, un dallage et des plaques de clôture en marbre, un autel surmonté d'un ciborium. Peu de marbres pour le reste de l'église et beaucoup de calcaire, comme de règle dans la région. L'église Nord, à laquelle Y. Tsafrir a consacré une étude exhaustive,<sup>29</sup> est bien mieux connue. Elle possède une crypte analogue à celle de l'église d'Horvat Berachot, un vaste atrium, une chapelle au Nord-Est de ce dernier. L'église, à trois nefs sans tribunes, était somptueusement décorée. Des fresques, des disques de verre peint ont été mis au jour. L'inscription sur le chapiteau dorique p.302 ne doit pas être lue 'De Boethos, fils de Makedonios' mais 'Aide Makedonios'.

Le dernier chapitre est consacré à la péninsule du Sinaï, rendue à l'Égypte mais où le service archéologique israélien a mené de nombreuses fouilles et prospections. E. D. Oren publie un résumé de ces fouilles à Ostracine ("A Christian settlement at Ostrakine in north Sinai," 305-14), dont la publication définitive est proche. Il commence par rappeler les fouilles de J. Clédar sur le site (églises centrale et du rivage). Il donne aussi un aperçu de ses propres fouilles. La basilique est bien conservée avec un ample synthronon, un sanctuaire avec autel et clôture en

<sup>28</sup> La superficie du pavement conservé est de 220 m<sup>2</sup> env (2.442 pieds carrés), soit une superficie totale estimée aux alentours de 300 m<sup>2</sup>; sur les rapports entre surface des pavements et prix, cf. les précieuses remarques de J.-P. Caillet, *L'évergétisme monumental chrétien en Italie et à ses marges* (Rome 1993) 451-65. En Grèce, la somme moyenne fournie par les donateurs d'une portion de mosaïque de pavement est un demi-nomisma à Olonte et à Kallion, un nomisma (*chrysinon*) à Antikyra (Olonte: S. Pélékanidis—P. Atzaka, *Recueil des mosaïques paléochrétiennes de Grèce* (en grec) I (Thessalonique 1974) 115-16 n°96; Kallion: P. Asimakopoulou-Atzaka, *Recueil II* (Thessalonique 1987) 199-201 n°134; Antikyra: *ibid.* 149-51 n°87). Cf aussi les remarques de la même, "Les donateurs dans les dédicaces grecques de l'Empire d'Orient" (en grec), *ARMOS. Mélanges N. K. Moutsopoulos* (Thessalonique 1990) 227-67 (essentiellement 238-39). Sur le problème général de la monnaie et des prix, cf. C. Morrisson, "Monnaie et prix à Byzance du Ve au VIIe s.," *Hommes et richesses dans l'empire byzantin I* (Paris 1989) 239-60.

<sup>29</sup> Y. Tsafrir, *Excavation at Rehovot in the Negev, I. The North Church* (Qedem 25, Jerusalem 1988).

marbre. La sacristie sud contenait une petite cuve octogonale (pour le baptême des enfants?) et un dispositif pour reliques. Elle a livré des stèles funéraires anthropomorphes et nombreux objets (poids, vaisselle en bronze, un manche en ivoire ou en os). On y a trouvé un follis de Constantin IV (666-685). Y. Tsafrir présente ensuite une étude générale du monastère du Sinaï et de ses environs ("Monks and monasteries in southern Sinai," 315-33). Pour le plan du monastère, il faut tenir compte des recherches toutes récentes de P. Grossmann.<sup>30</sup> Les prospections et les fouilles d'I. Finkelstein ("Byzantine remains at Jebel Sufsafah (Mt. Horeb) in southern Sinai," 334-40) et d'U. Dahari ("Remote monasteries in southern Sinai and their economic base," 341-50) sur les ermitages et les chapelles de la partie sud du Sinaï complètent ce panorama.

Cette ample présentation des principaux résultats, heureusement choisis, des fouilles israéliennes sur les sites chrétiens est stimulante et fournit des matériaux nombreux pour de futures synthèses.<sup>31</sup> Des cartes, entre la p.6 et 7 et en tête de chaque chapitre, permettent au lecteur peu familier de la géographie de la région de s'y retrouver facilement. Un glossaire aidera les étudiants débutants et un public plus large. Un bon index clôt l'ouvrage. Un seul regret: l'absence de numérotation des figures qui peut donner lieu à certaines ambiguïtés.

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<sup>30</sup> P. Grossmann, "Neue baugeschichtliche Untersuchungen im Katharinenkloster im Sinai," *Arch. Anz.* 1988, 543-58.

<sup>31</sup> Renvoyons dès maintenant à une étude récente de N. Duval, qui fait le point sur les installations liturgiques des églises du Proche Orient: "L'architecture chrétienne et les pratiques liturgiques en Jordanie en rapport avec la Palestine. Recherches nouvelles," dans K. Painter (ed.), *Churches built in ancient times. Recent studies in Early Christian Archaeology* (London 1994) 149-212. Signalons aussi dans ce même volume la remarquable étude préliminaire de M. Biddle, "The Tomb of Christ. Sources, methods and a new approach," pp.73-147.



# The involvement of local, municipal and provincial authorities in urban building in late antique Palestine and Arabia

## Leah Di Segni

This article deals with the epigraphical evidence relating to public building in Palestine and its vicinity. It deliberately leaves aside the classical city, and concentrates on the period between the mid-4th and the 6th c. The most relevant inscriptions are presented below, but they are offered as raw material for further study, with no pretension to draw any far-reaching conclusions. The sample is not large. Its geographical homogeneity is helpful in producing a consistent picture, but it is not a complete picture. Also, the period considered has not such a limited span as to be unaffected by changes pertaining to the jurisdiction of the different authorities and to their mutual relations. Caution is therefore necessary in appraising the contribution of the evidence to the general picture of early Byzantine city life.

For all that, the student can hardly fail to be impressed by some basic differences between the usual picture of urban life in classical antiquity and the reality emerging from the inscriptions discussed below, with complete silence on the involvement of the citizens' body (ἡ πόλις, ὁ δῆμος), of the city council (ἡ βουλή), and of private φιλοψυία. However, it should be kept in mind that even in the Roman period, and within the limited area concerned, the picture presented by the various cities is far from uniform; specifically, the involvement of different elements in building activity cannot be treated as a single proposition. Most of the published material comes from Gerasa and Bostra, but the massive involvement of local ~~magistrates~~ and municipal officials in public building at Gerasa is not matched at Bostra, where provincial governors were more active than those who ran the city, where private φιλοψυία was almost completely lacking, and where soldiers were most frequently involved in the minor buildings (e.g. honorific monuments and pedestals). Another, still unpublished body of civic inscriptions, that of Caesarea,<sup>1</sup> shows a lack of interest on the part of the citizens, even more so than at Bostra. There is no convincing evidence of private φιλοψυία. The sole builder is the governor, or the emperor himself through the army; the city as a collective is involved only in the erection of minor monuments in honour of its patrons. Honorific dedications are made by citizens to their patrons on a personal basis, never as representative of the city.

### A Church building

Of the many building inscriptions of the Byzantine period, most refer to churches, which is hardly surprising since churches were built in large numbers chiefly for devotional needs, whereas civil buildings were dictated by utilitarian considerations. Building inscriptions in churches mention almost exclusively the ecclesiastical authorities — the bishop (or a *chorepiscopus* or *periodeutes* for country churches), and the priest in charge of the construction, or, in the absence of a priest, a deacon responsible. When both bishop and priest are mentioned, the name of the former is introduced by the preposition ἐνί, that of the latter either by ἐνί or by διά, σπουδῇ, or the like; if only the priest is mentioned, his name may be introduced by ἐνί or by other formulas indicating his personal concern (perhaps even his material or financial interest) such as ἐκ τῶν καμάτων. The formula chosen is important: while διά, σπουδῇ, and the like indicate some kind of active rôle played in the building, the use of ἐνί is ambiguous: it may

<sup>1</sup> A corpus of the Greek and Latin inscriptions of Caesarea, edited by K. G. Holum and C. M. Lehmann, is forthcoming.

refer to involvement in the planning stage or even involvement in financing, or it may simply provide a mark of homage to the authorities; alternatively, ἐπί may provide chronological information by introducing the name of a high magistrate. The eponymous character of such a mention in a building inscription is sometimes made clear by the use of the phrase ἐν χρόνῳ instead of ἐπί.

Church inscriptions may therefore mention religious authorities on the diocesan or on the local level. The provincial or municipal authorities never appear in their official capacity. In the very rare cases when a government representative may be mentioned in a church inscription, it is always as a benefactor acting in his private capacity. This is indicated both by the phrasing of the inscription, and by the fact that the dedicator gives his rank but not his specific office. For example, in the Kyra Maria monastery in Scythopolis (Beth Shean), a long inscription in front of the entrance names as donors several members of a local aristocratic family:

Προσφορὰ ὑπὲρ μνημῆς καὶ τελείας ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναπαύσεως Ζωσμοῦ Ἰλουστρίου καὶ σωτηρίας καὶ ἀντιλήψεως Ἰωάννου ἐνδοξοτάτου ἀπὸ ἐπάρχων καὶ Πέτρου καὶ Ἀναστασίου φιλοχρίστων κομῆτων καὶ παντὸς τοῦ εὐλογημένου αὐτῶν οἴκου εὐχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων. Ἀμήν.

G. M. FitzGerald, *A sixth century monastery at Beth Shan (Scythopolis)* (University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia 1939) 13-14.

"Offering for the memory and perfect rest in Christ of the *illustis* Zosimus and for the preservation and succour of John, the most glorious ex-prefect, and of Peter and Anastasius, Christ-loving counts, and of all their blessed household, thanks to the prayers of the saints. Amen."

Some of them may have held municipal or provincial offices, but if so the fact is not mentioned. Again, in the church of St Thecla at Kafar Kama in Lower Galilee (possibly the episcopal see of Helenoupolis), one of the dedicatory inscriptions of a chapel attached to the church opens with a blessing on two important personages, one representing the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the other belonging to the State ranks:

Ἵπὲρ σωτηρίας τοῦ ἀγνωστάτου Εὐφρασίου ἐπισκόπου) καὶ τοῦ ἐνδοξ(οτάτου) στρατηλάτου Θεοδόρου ἐτελιώθη καὶ ἐψηφόθη ἡ ἀγία Θέκλα χρόνους) ἰνδ(ικτιῶνος) ιε' καὶ Παμφίλου ἀρχιεπισκόπου). Κ(ύριε Ἰησοῦ Χ(ριστ)έ, δέξε τὴν προσφοράν Ἀριανοῦ διακόνου).

A. Saaristo, H. Palva, *A Byzantine Church at Kafr Kama* (Studia Orientalia Societatis Orientalis Fennicae XXX,1, Helsinki 1964) 11-14.

**"For the preservation of the most holy bishop Euphrasius and of the most glorious commander Theodore (the church of) St Thecla was completed and paved with mosaics, in the time of the fifteenth indiction and of Pamphilus the archdeacon. Lord Jesus Christ, accept the offering of Arianus the deacon."**

It seems that both the local bishop and a military commander had shown interest in the building, probably by giving money for its erection. The editors identified the στρατηλάτης Theodore with "Theodorus Simus, the commander who suppressed the Samaritan revolt in A.D. 529 ... one of the governors of Provincia Palaestina Secunda"; accordingly, they suggested to date the inscription to a 15th indiction within the term of his office, presumably in 536/7. Theodore would then be a *dux Palaestinae* or a civil governor. However, the editors were mistaken in identifying the Theodore who fought the Samaritans in 529 with a governor of *Palaestina Secunda*, who was a civil official.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, in 530/1, following his unsuccessful

2 Indeed we have from Malalas the name of the governor of *Palaestina Secunda* in charge at the outbreak of the revolt: he was Bassus, whom the emperor had executed for his failure in quelling the



handling of the crisis, the man was removed from his post and imprisoned by a special envoy of Justinian, Irenaeus, who replaced him in the ducal command: thus Theodore could not have been *dux Palaestinae* in the 15th indiction.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, as a rule the term στρατηλάτης does not apply to a *dux*, but rather to a *magister militum*.<sup>4</sup> It seems unlikely that a *magister militum per Orientem* might have taken an interest in a church erected in an obscure town of Palestine, so far from his headquarters or his field of action; it is more likely that the man mentioned in the inscription was an honorary *magister militum*. If so, the title does not apply to any post he may have held, but only to his position and rank.

Also, local notables and officers rarely appear and only in the rôle of donors. For example, at Gerasa in the church of SS Cosmas and Damianus (dated 533) a *tribunus*, probably the commander of the city garrison, appears in a typical offertory inscription:

Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς τοῦ ἁγίου Κοσμά καὶ Δαμιανοῦ ἐλέησον τὸν τριβούνον Δαγισθέον καὶ πρόσδεξε τὴν αὐτοῦ προσφορὰν.

C. B. Welles, *apud* C. H. Kraeling, *Gerasa* (New Haven 1938) no.311.

"Lord god of SS Cosmas and Damianus, have pity on the *tribunus* Dagisthaeus and accept his donation".

However, in a small number of church inscriptions local authorities are mentioned as being actively involved in the construction, though mostly this happens in villages and small towns. For example, at ed-Deir in Jordan, a village south of Madaba, the mosaic pavement of a monastic church (6th c.) bears the inscription:

ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας καὶ ἀντιλήψεως Θεοδώρου ἐνδοξοτάτου ἱλλουστρίου ἐκ θεμελίων ἐκτίσθη καὶ ἐτελιώθη ὁ ἅγιος οἶκος οὗτος ἐκ σπουδῆς I - - - λαμπροτάτου ἐπιτρόπου χρόνους ζ' ἰνδ(ικτιώνος)-

SEG XXVII, no.1006; P. L. Gatier, *Inscriptions de la Jordanie* (Paris 1986) no.175.

"For the preservation and succour of Theodore, the most glorious *illustris*, this holy house was built from the foundations by the effort of (name lost) the *clarissimus* steward, in the sixth indiction."

The function of the ἐπίτροπος (Latin *procurator*) is better known from inscriptions referring to the *procuratores Augusti* who often acted as deputy governors in the earlier Roman period, but

disorders (*Chronicon*, L. XVIII, ed. Bonn, 445). It is also worth noting that the name of the *dux Palaestinae* was not Theodorus Simus, as stated by Malalas (*ibid.*, 446-47), but just Theodorus, as appears from Cyril of Scythopolis' report of the events (*Life of Sabas*, ch.70, ed. E. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis* [Leipzig 1939, TU 49ii] 172). True, Malalas calls him Theodorus ὁ Σίμος, but this is the result of a not uncharacteristic confusion on the chronographer's part between the *dux* in 529 and Summus, who was *dux Palaestinae* twice, first in 531/2 and possibly until 534, and for the second time between 535 and 538. In Malalas' fragment preserved in Constantinus Porphyrogenetus' *Excerpta de insidiis*, fr.44 (ed. C. De Boor, Paris 1903, 171), the same man is called Theodotus or Theodorus ὁ Μεγάλος, a pseudo-translation of Summus. Actually Summus is not a Latin name, but the Semitic Somas, and indeed the man was a Palestinian. Both Choricus of Gaza and Cyril of Scythopolis knew Summus well, and they never call him Theodorus; and speaking of the *dux* Theodorus, Cyril does not identify him with the friend and benefactor of Sabas' monasteries of whom he tells so much. A different interpretation is offered by J. R. Martindale, who makes of Summus, Theodorus ὁ Σίμος and Theodotus ὁ Μεγάλος three different *duces Palaestinae*, all serving between 529 and 531 (PLRE II 1038-39; PLRE III 1245-46, 1300-01; cf. also Joannes 8, PLRE III 626).

<sup>3</sup> Neither could he have been in office in the earlier 15th indiction, in 521/2: seemingly the *dux* at that time was Antipater (A. Alt, ZDPV 50 [1927] 173-75; PLRE II 106). In any case, the Samaritan revolt broke out in the 7th indiction, and it is unlikely that a *dux* could have held such a long term of office.

<sup>4</sup> E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire* II (Paris 1949; Amsterdam 1968) 272, n.2; M. Sartre, IGLS XIII, 1, 190, n.1.

the term means simply "administrator" and can designate the steward of a private domain as well as an imperial one.<sup>5</sup> As for "most glorious *illustris*," the title does not necessarily classify this individual as a magistrate, and the formulation shows that he was not involved in the building in his capacity as a local or provincial authority. Nevertheless, the blessing invoked on Theodore indicates that he had some standing in the case, and the respectful attitude shown him by the dedicator qualifies their relationship. We can probably conclude that the church was built on the property of Theodore, a member of the local aristocracy, and possibly at his bidding, by the steward of the estate. A parallel for this occurrence is found in the *Life of Sabas*:<sup>6</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis relates that, following dissension in the Great Laura, Sabas retired to the territory of Emmaus-Nicopolis (ἐπὶ τὰ μέρη Νικοπόλεως) and lived in seclusion under a carob tree. The administrator of the site (ὁ τοῦ τόπου ἐπίτροπος) heard of the presence of the holy man, came to see him, and built a cell for him in the same place, which after a few days developed into a *coenobium*. The carob tree, it seems, was planted on a private estate on the outskirts of Emmaus, and the steward of the estate took it upon himself to build a monastery without bothering to call in the church authorities.

Another village official who took an active rôle in church construction was the πιστικός. Unfortunately this term is found in only three inscriptions so far as I know (one of them belonging to the 8th c.), whose contexts are not very precise. A mosaic pavement discovered at Beth Ther in Judaea, decorated with medallions and dated to the late 6th or 7th c. or even later (based upon style), encloses inscriptions that point to the ecclesiastical character of the building. One inscription says:

Επὶ τοῦ θεοφιλεστάτου Γεωργίου πρεσβυτέρου ἐγένητω τὰ ὡς.  
H. Vincent, *RevBibl* 19 (1910) 254-61; M. Avi-Yonah, QDAP 2 (1932) 142, no.13

"The (buildings) here were made under the most God-loving priest George."

Another inscription reads:

Σπουδῇ Εὐουλιανοῦ πιστικοῦ ἐγένετο μηνὶ Μαρτίου ἐνδ(ικτιώνος) ε'.

Ibidem.

"By the care of Julian the *pistikos* this was done in the month of March of the fifth indiction".

The editors were uncertain as to the meaning of the word πιστικός and took it either for a name or for an adjective meaning "faithful". The term is found again in a dedication in the church of Bishop Sergius at Umm er Rasas in Transjordan (dated 587), which says:

Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς βοήθησον τοὺς καμόντας τὸ ψῆφειν τοῦτον ὃν ὁ Κύριος γινώσκει τὰ ὀνόματα ἐν τοῖς χρόνοις Κοέλου Κασσιέου Ἀβδάλου Ὀρέδου Ἠλίου πιστικοί.

M. Piccirillo, *LibAnn* 37 [1987] 207, no.48.

"Lord God, help those who toiled for the making of this mosaic, whose names are known to the Lord, in the days of Soelos, Casiseos, Abdallah, Obodos, and Elias the πιστικοί."

A third occurrence of πιστικός appears in the church of St Stephen at Umm er Rasas (8th c.):

Μνήσθιτι Κύριε τοῦ δούλου σου Ναουμα πιστικοῦ Γερμανοῦ.

Ibidem, 188, no.6.

"Lord, remember your servant Nahum son of Germanus, the πιστικός."

<sup>5</sup> Of course the ἐπίτροποι are also well known from the sources: e.g. John Chrysostom, *Homilia in Matthaeum* 61 (PG 58, 614). The term passed into Aramaic, and Talmudic sources mention the *epitropos* and his relations with the tenants in privately owned villages in Palestine. See D. Sperber, *Roman Palestine 200-400. The Land* (Ramat-Gan 1978) 6, 119 ff., 136 ff., 177 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Life of Sabas* ch.35, ed. Schwartz, 120-21.



The editor translated the word πιστικός "faithful" either in the sense of Christians or as the designation of a military unit. The phrasing, however, suggests that they were village magistrates who held a collegial office for a fixed term, rather like the πιστοί or trustees mentioned in inscriptions of the 4th-5th c. from the Hauran, who acted in groups of up to five individuals and were involved in the planning (προνοία) of buildings.<sup>7</sup>

The term πιστικός is found also in literary sources of the Byzantine period in the sense of a "confidential agent" of the emperor or of a private citizen: a πιστικός, or travelling agent of a wealthy merchant, appears in the *Pratum* of John Moschus.<sup>8</sup> In this sense the term πιστικός corresponds to the earlier term ἐπίτροπος (see above). Umm er Rasas was not, however, a κτήμα, a domain or privately owned village, to judge by the large number of churches built by its prosperous villagers, and it had no single steward but rather several elected 'trustees'.

A second inscription from the pavement of St. Stephen's church at Umm er Rasas names as supervisor of the work (by the term σπουδῇ) one John who held the double rôle of deacon and steward of the church (οἰκονόμος), and ἄρχων of κάστρον Μεφάων, the ancient name of the town.

Ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀγιοτάτου Σεργίου ἐπισκόπου ἐτελιώθη ἡ ψήφωσις τοῦ ἀγίου καὶ ἐνδόξου πρωτοδιακόνου καὶ πρωτομάρτυρος Στεφάνου σπουδῇ Ἰωάννου Ἰσακίου Δεξου θεοφιλεστάτου διακόνου καὶ ἄρχοντι Μεφάων οἰκονόμου καὶ παντὸς τοῦ φιλοχρίστου λαοῦ κάστρου Μεφάων ἐν μηνὶ Ὀκτωβρίῳ Ἰνδικτιώνος β' τοῦ ἔτους ἡπαρχίας Ἀραβίας χ' καὶ ὑπὲρ μνήμης καὶ ἀναπαύσεως Φιδόνου Ἀείας φιλοχρίστου.

Ibidem 184, no.4.

"Under the most holy bishop Sergius the mosaic pavement of (the church) of the most holy and glorious protodeacon and protomartyr Stephan was completed, by the zeal of John son of Isaac Lexos, the most God-loving deacon and chief of Mefaa, steward, and of all the Christ-loving people of Castron Mefaa, in the month of October of the second indiction, in the year 680 of the *provincia Arabia*, and for the memory and rest of Christ-loving Phidon son of Aeias."

The qualification of John as deacon and steward of the church, however, seems to indicate that although he held also a civil charge in the town, he was involved in the work in his ecclesiastical capacity, especially considering the predicative position of οἰκονόμος in the sentence. However, it is difficult to define the sort of leadership represented by the term ἄρχων in a small Christian community under Islamic rule: it may well have consisted of representative-economic functions inseparable from the task fulfilled by John on behalf of the local church.<sup>9</sup>

Another instance of the involvement of a local chief in church building occurs in the small town of Shivta in the Negev. A *vicarius* or lieutenant — in all probability the deputy commander of a unit of *limitanei* settled in this agricultural area<sup>10</sup> — is mentioned beside the

<sup>7</sup> H. I. MacAdam, *Studies in the history of the Roman province of Arabia. The northern section* (BAR 5295, Oxford 1986) 167-62.

<sup>8</sup> Joannes Moschus, *Leimonarion* (*Pratum spirituale*) ch.79 (PG 87 iii, 2936).

<sup>9</sup> Some late-7th century papyri from Nessana support this interpretation. From these it would appear that the manager of Nessana (called διοικητής in several letters), to whom requisitions and orders from the governor of the province (*kura*) of Gaza were addressed, was nobody else but the priest and abbot of SS. Sergius and Bacchus, the largest ecclesiastical complex in the town, called "North Church" by the excavators. See C. J. Kraemer, *Non-literary Papyri*, in H. D. Colt (ed.), *Excavations at Nessana III* (Princeton 1958) 7-8.

<sup>10</sup> No fort was discovered at Shivta; however, the presence of a military unit is indicated by the mention of a *vicarius* and *priores* in another building inscription, that will be discussed below. In any case, not far to the north of the town was the fortified site of Mizpe Shivta, plausibly identified with the 'fort

priest as curator of works in a chapel of the Northern Church. The inscription can be dated to the early 7th c., probably to 607.

Ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀγιοτάτου ἐπισκόπου Θάμα ἐγένετο τοῦτο τὸ ἔργον ἐπιμελείᾳ Ἰωάννου πρεσβυτέρου καὶ τοῦ λαμπροτάτου Ἰωάννου βικαρίου μηνὶ Δεσίου Ἰνδικτιώνος ι'.

A. Negev, *The Greek Inscriptions from the Negev* (Jerusalem 1981) 60-61, no.66.

"Under the most holy bishop Thomas this work was done, by the care of John the priest and of the *clarissimus vicarius* John in the month of Desius of the tenth indiction."

It is unclear why John should have been involved in church building: no money offering is explicitly mentioned. However, John must have bestowed some kind of patronage on this church, since some members of his family were buried within<sup>11</sup> — a privilege not easily granted to laymen. John's status, therefore, was in fact that of a benefactor.

In conclusion, there is very little evidence that local or provincial authorities were involved in church building: their involvement seems not to have been official and only on a small scale. In any case, it is documented only in villages and small towns.

## B. Non-ecclesiastical (civil) buildings

### 1. The provincial governor

Inscriptions which mention provincial and municipal authorities are found chiefly in connection with civil buildings. In the Byzantine period it is the provincial governor who most frequently appears in dedicatory inscriptions. This is only to be expected. Since the Roman period the emperor had limited the cities' freedom of action in the matter of public expenditure, especially by making imperial permission a prerequisite for any public building erected at public expense (*Dig.* 50, 10, 3). The provincial governor was instrumental in ensuring that such licence was attained.<sup>12</sup> The legislation of the 4th c. shows the provincial governors as eager to promote public building in the main cities as a means to extol their successful leadership in the province; the emperor, on the other hand, was anxious to restrain their enthusiasm for new foundations and to compel them to restore the old public buildings that had fallen into disrepair and to complete those left unfinished by their predecessors, before they were permitted to initiate new ones. Exceptions could be made only for the construction of indispensable installations like public warehouses and stables.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, the cities had seen their revenues greatly reduced by the assignment of the larger part of them to the emperor's *res privata*. Want of funds soon made itself felt in the upkeep of civic buildings. The law intervened to ensure their maintenance by apportioning a fixed part of the city's remaining revenues for this use.<sup>14</sup> Another law, issued in 380, dictated to the governor how to dispose of the building budget: two thirds were to go into restoration of dilapidated edifices, one third he could use for new construction for the glorification of his name ('*si famae et propriis cupit*

and inn of Saint George' of the Piacenza pilgrim (*Itinerarium* 35) by Y. Baumgarten, in *New encyclopedia of archaeological excavations in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem 1993) III, 1059-61. The existence of a church does not prove that the site was a monastery.

<sup>11</sup> A. Negev, *The Greek inscriptions from the Negev* (Jerusalem 1981) 52, 55, nos. 51, 57.

<sup>12</sup> There is evidence to show that permission was often obtained, not by direct approach to the emperor, but by approaching his local representative, the governor. See P. Garnsey, R. Saller, *The Roman empire. Economy, society and culture* (Berkeley 1987) 37; A. K. Bowman, "Public Building in Roman Egypt," *JRA* 5 (1992) 495-503.

<sup>13</sup> *CTh* 15, 1, 2 (321), 3 (362), 14 (365), 15-17 (365), 18 (374), 21 (380), 29 (393).

<sup>14</sup> *CTh* 4, 13, 5 (358); 5, 14, 35 (395 = *CJ* 11, 70, 3); 15, 1, 18 (374). See also A. Chastagnol, "La législation sur les biens des villes au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle à la lumière d'une inscription d'Ephèse," *Atti del V convegno dell'Accademia romanistica costantiniana* (Perugia 1968) 77-104; A. H. M. Jones, *The later Roman empire I* (Oxford 1964, repr. 1990) 732-33.



laudibus providere': CTh 15, 1, 20). It seems, therefore, that the responsibility for civic building — upkeep, renovation and development — was divided between the provincial governor and the city and neither was free from limitations and obligations, especially on the financial side; but the mutual relations between the two powers are not at all clear. As for the aspect that stands out most conspicuously from the epigraphic evidence, namely, the 'renown' that formed the main object of the governors' building zeal, another law of 380 instructed them to give precedence to the completion of projects left unfinished by their predecessors 'as if these had been initiated by themselves' (CTh 15, 1, 21): a ruling that implicitly gave any governor the right to place his own name on buildings to which he had added only a finishing touch — and that may explain the plurality of names in a single complex (e.g. the palaestra compound in Beth Shean), as well as the mendacious praise of a governor who 'built from the foundations' a structure that had clearly been in existence for many years (like the nymphaeum in the same city).<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, in a last and most forcible endeavour to quell the governors' building fever, a law was issued in 394 forbidding any new construction except by special permission of the emperor, and threatening with charges of high treason a governor who should dare to place his name, instead of the emperor's, on any public work he might have completed (CTh 15, 1, 31). The edict was repeated in the Codex Justinianus (8, 11, 10), and was therefore still in force, at least theoretically, in the 6th c.; but its effectiveness is contradicted by the epigraphic evidence. Thus, although laws as documents cannot be lightly pushed aside, their evidence throws light more on the problems then affecting urban life than on the solutions actually adopted. We shall therefore detach the epigraphic material from the juridical presumptions and let the inscriptions speak for themselves as best as they can.

From Diocletian's reform, Palestine had both a military governor (the *dux Palaestinae*) and a civil governor (a *consularis* up to the 370s, then a proconsul until the early 5th c.). Subsequently, each of the three *Palaestinae* had its own civil governor (*ἄρχων* or *ἡγεμών*)<sup>16</sup> but all three continued to be under the command of one *dux*. All these officials held high rank: in the 4th c. they were *clarissimi* (*λαμπρότατοι*), then, at the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th c., both the proconsul and the *dux* were *spectabiles* (*περίβλεπτοι*). After the division of Palestine into three provinces, the governors were again *clarissimi*, but, with the progressive devaluation of the titles, the new attribute *μεγαλοπρεπέστατος* (*magnificentissimus*) came into use, and more and more officials appear who enjoyed a higher rank than was warranted by their office as a personal grant. By the 6th c. the *dux* was *gloriosissimus* (*ἐνδοξότατος*) and after 536 the proconsul of *Palaestina Prima* was officially *spectabilis*; moreover, it is not rare to find even governors of lesser grade endowed with rank of *illustris* or even *gloriosissimus*. It would be a mistake, however, to take for a civil or military governor any personage who boasted one of those titles, if his office is not explicitly mentioned or clearly implied by the context.

The name of the governor often appears in the formula *Ἐπὶ τοῦ λαμπροτάτου* or *μεγαλοπρεπέστατου δεῖνα*, or whatever rank and title he had at a particular time. We usually translate this formula rather imprecisely, "In the days of ...", thereby treating the governor as an eponym and the formula as a piece of chronological information, analogous to dating by consuls or by regnal years. In classical Greek and *koinē* it is true that *ἐπὶ* with a magistrate's name does provide a chronological point, and the same is undoubtedly the case in many of our inscriptions. Sometimes we find *ἐν χρόνῳ* instead of *ἐπὶ*, as in the inscriptions that refer to

<sup>15</sup> G. Mazor, "City center of ancient Bet Shean — South," *ESI* 6 (1987/88) 10-18; G. Foerster, Y. Tsafir, "Center of ancient Bet Shean — North," *ibid.* 27-28.

<sup>16</sup> The governor of *Palaestina Prima* was the senior of the three: he was *ἄρχων* with the rank of *consularis* until 536, when Justinian promoted him to the rank of proconsul (*Novella* 103). The governor of *Palaestina Secunda* was seemingly a *ἡγεμών* until Justinian's reform, and only later *ἄρχων* with consular rank.

renovation of the wall of Scythopolis under Justin I. A copy mentions the governor Flavius Leo, two mention his predecessor or successor Flavius Anastasius:

Ἐκ τῆς δοθείσης θείας φιλοτιμίας κατὰ αἴτησιν Φλαουίου Ἀρσενίου τοῦ ἐνδοξοτάτου τὸ πᾶν ἔργον τοῦ τείχους ἀνεγέρθη ἐν χρόνοις Φλαουίου Δέοντος τοῦ μεγαλοπρεπέστατου ἄρχοντος ἐν ἡδικοῦντος δ' (or α').

SEG VIII no.34.

"With a grant made by the imperial liberality at the request of the most glorious Fl. Arsenius, the whole fabric of the city wall was renovated, in the time of Fl. Leon, the most distinguished governor, in the fourth (first?) indiction."

Α Ἐκ τῆς δοθείσης θείας φιλοτιμίας κατὰ αἴτησιν Φλαουίου Ἀρσενίου τοῦ ἐνδοξοτάτου τὸ πᾶν ἔργον τοῦ τείχους ἀνεγέρθη ἐν χρόνοις Φλαουίου Ἀναστασίου λαμπροτάτου ἄρχοντος ἐν ἡδικοῦντος γ'.

Β Ἐκ τῆς δοθείσης θείας φιλοτιμίας κατὰ αἴτησιν Φλαουίου Ἀρσενίου τοῦ ἐνδοξοτάτου καὶ τὸ ἔργον τοῦ τείχους ἀνεγέρθη ἐν χρόνοις Φλαουίου Ἀναστασίου τοῦ λαμπροτάτου ἄρχοντος ἐν ἡδικοῦντος γ'.

SEG VIII no 35.

"With a grant made by the imperial liberality at the request of the most glorious Fl. Arsenius, all the fabric (B: also the fabric) of the city wall was renovated, in the time of Fl. Anastasius, the most distinguished governor, in the third indiction."

Clearly in this case the later governor completed a work commenced under his predecessor and added his own name to it, although it is apparent from the text that neither had initiated the project. It is hard to imagine that a governor could condense into one or two years of his tenure all the stages of a building project — especially when planning and financing were required as well as organizing and executing the work — up to the crowning act of setting up the inscription. Unless all the men involved succeeded in taking the credit as in the present case, it is easier to suppose that it was the individual who happened to be governor at the time of completion who signed his name to the whole project.

Yet there are hints that governors were more involved than simply through the act of attaching their name eponymously to a building. The phraseology of some inscriptions indicates that particular governors bore real responsibility for particular works. First, alongside the formula with *ἐπὶ*, parallel expressions are used to highlight the active rôle played by the governor. At Scythopolis several doublets or pairs of inscriptions refer to the same work done under one and the same governor: in one inscription we find *ἐπὶ τοῦ δεῖνα ἐγένετο*, in another *ἔργον τοῦ δεῖνα* or *ὁ δεῖνας ἔκτισεν*. Sometimes there are additions which provide information on the specific behaviour of the governor in carrying out a particular project. Thus, again from Scythopolis, on the pavement of the northern portico of the palaestra, we find:

"With good luck. Under Flavius Nysios Sergius the Scythopolitan, the most magnificent *comes* and *consularis*; he erected all the building of the portico, without touching municipal funds. Year 598, indiction 13 (= A.D. 534/535)."<sup>17</sup>

G. Mazor, *ESI* 6 (1987/1988) 17.

On the one hand, the governor's name is introduced by *ἐπὶ*, on the other it serves as the unexpressed subject of the whole sentence — *he* erected the portico, *he* found the means of financing the works without depleting the city coffers. It should be noted that I do not take this

<sup>17</sup> The Greek text of this inscription is still unpublished. In the preliminary report by G. Mazor a free translation is given which does not correspond to the letter of the text. My translation is literal up to the misshapen syntax.



to mean that Flavius Nysios paid for the work himself,<sup>18</sup> only that he provided the necessary capital from an alternative source, whether imperial or provincial funds, or even from the confiscation of Samaritan property (see below). The specifics of this inscription therefore show that Flavius Nysios took a personal interest in the planning of the project.

In certain cases, another detail provides an additional indication that the governor's rôle was not simply an eponymous one. There is some evidence that, while the vast majority of public constructions mention the civil governor, dedicatory inscriptions of military and para-military buildings name the *dux*. This point is difficult to prove since in the *provincia Arabia*, where most of the *castrae* were built, for most of the period in question both offices were united in the hands of one man, the *dux et iudex*.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, in the early period after Diocletian's reign and before the unification of the civil and military offices in Arabia (which probably occurred in the 360s), there may have been some squabbling about the division of responsibilities for constructing fortifications. If the *dux* had the authority to order or responsibilities for constructing fortifications. If the *dux* had the authority to order construction, it was the *praeses* who held the purse strings. We may note that the building of a fort in Judaea in the Flavian is ascribed by two identical inscriptions "to the forethought and disposition" of the *iudex* in one case, of the *dux* in the other. Later, however, the military authorities were given the means to engage in military construction on their own.

Ἐκ προνοίας καὶ διατυπώσεως Φλαυίου Σιλβινιανῶ τοῦ λαμπροτάτου δοῦκος τὸ φρούριον ἐκτίσθη.

M. Dunand, *RB* 41 (1932) 571, no.108; SEG VII no.1061.

"The fort was built owing to the forethought and disposition of Flavius Silvianus, the *perfectissimus dux*."<sup>20</sup>

Ἐκ προνοίας καὶ διατυπώσεως Φλαυίου Ἀρχελάου τοῦ λαμπροτάτου κόμητος καὶ ἡγεμόνος τὸ φρούριον ἐκτίσθη ἔτει σμδ'.

M. Dunand, *RB* 41 (1932) 571-72, no.108; SEG VII no.1062.

"The fort was built owing to the forethought and disposition of Flavius Archelaus, the *clarissimus* count and *praeses*, in the year 244 (A.D. 349/350)."

Two inscriptions, one from Bostra, the other from Gerasa, refer to the fortification of the city walls in 440/1 by order of the στρατηλάτης Anatolius, identified with the *magister militum per Orientem* and consul of that year. The men who took care of the work were *clarissimi*, probably local *honorati* charged with the execution of the work by the *magister militum* himself. One of them, the *comes* Fl. Simplicius, is identified by Sartre — perhaps too hastily — with the civil governor of Arabia.<sup>21</sup>

Ἐκ κελεύσεως τοῦ κυρίου μου τοῦ μεγαλοπρεπεστάτου στρατηλάτου ὑπάτου Φλαυίου Ἀνατολίου ἐτίθεντο (ἐγένετο ?) ὁ πύργος προνοούντος Καβίνου λαμπροτάτου ἐν ἔτι τλε'.

Sartre, *IGLS* XIII no.9118.

<sup>18</sup> It is true that as a Scythopolitan (by name as well as by birth — Nysa being the ancient name of Scythopolis in tradition) Nysios would have been particularly well disposed towards the city. However, there is no hint in the phraseology of his having personally contributed to the building. His goodwill expressed itself in sparing his fellow-citizens' purse.

<sup>19</sup> Several governors of Arabia who bore this double title are known from epigraphic and other sources. See M. Sartre, "Les gouverneurs de l'Arabie romaine," in *Trois études sur l'Arabie romaine et byzantine* (Collection Latomus 178, 1982) 77-120.

<sup>20</sup> Fl. Silvianus, *vir perfectissimus*, is known as *dux Arabiae* from two inscriptions, dated 348/349 and 351/352: PAES III A no.224; Waddington no.2194.

<sup>21</sup> "Les gouverneurs" (supra n.19) 107. The strongest reason for the identification is not the title of *comes*, as Sartre maintains, but the use of ἐπί, but even this, in my opinion, is not cogent enough.

"By order of my lord the most magnificent commander and consul Flavius Anatolius, the tower was made, by the provision of the *clarissimus* Sabinus in year 335 (A.D. 440/1)."

Ἐπὶ τοῦ κυρίου μου Φλαυίου Ἀνατολίου τοῦ μεγαλοπρεπεστάτου στρατηλάτου καὶ ὑπάτου καὶ ἐπὶ Φλαυίου Καμπλίκου τοῦ λαμπροτάτου κόμητος ἀνοικοδομήθη ἡ πύλη ? καὶ τὸ τεῖχος.

C. B. Welles *apud* C.H. Kraeling, *Gerasa* (New Haven, Conn. 1938) 467, no.273.

"Under my lord Flavius Anatolius, the most magnificent commander and consul, and under Flavius Simplicius the *clarissimus* count, the gate (?) and the wall were built."

The mention of Anatolius' consulate makes it clear that both inscriptions belong to the same year, 440/1, when he was colleague of Valentinian III. This, and the similarity of the texts, suggest that both inscription referred to a series of defensive works ordered by the *magister militum per Orientem* in the cities of the eastern frontier.<sup>22</sup> It is worth noting that Ἐκ κελεύσεως of the one corresponds to ἐπί of the other.

Another inscription from Jiza south of Madaba, discovered reused in a Turkish fort, evidently comes from the Roman or Byzantine fort of Ziza, mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum* as a garrison of the *Equites Dalmati Illyriciani*. The inscription says that the fort was renewed in 580, ἐπὶ Φλ Παύλου ἐνδοξοτάτου δοῦκος. At that time the functions of *dux* and civil governor had again been separated.

+ Ἐπὶ Φλαυίου Παύλου ἐνδοξοτάτου δοῦκος σπουδῇ Πέτρου τὸν τόπον ἄρχοντος ὑπὸ λαμπροτάτου Χριστογόνου ἀνεκδόθη ? τῷ 1 υοε' αἰτι χρ(όνων) ιδ' ἰνδικτιῶνος Δκ(ον) ?1 θ'.

Gatier, *IGLJ* no.155.

"Under Fl. Paulus, the *gloriosissimus dux*, through the effort of Peter, the commanding officer of the area, by the *clarissimus* Christogonos (?) (the fort) was renovated, in the year 475, in the 14th indiction, Dios 7."<sup>23</sup>

In Palestine itself, a 4th-c. inscription from the vicinity of Beth Govrin (Eleutheropolis) commemorates the erection of a hostelry by the *dux* Fl. Quintianus.

Ἐπὶ Φλαυίου Κυντιανοῦ τοῦ λαμπροτάτου κόμητος καὶ δοῦκος τὸ ἀπαντητήριον ἐκ θεμελίων ἐκτίσθη.

Y. Dagan, M. Fischer, Y. Tsafir, *IEJ* 35 (1985) 22-27; SEG XXXII no.1496; XXXV no.1537.

"Under Flavius Quintianus, the *clarissimus* count and *dux*, the hostelry was built from the foundations."

The ἀπαντητήριον, like the πανδοχεῖον or δημόσιος οἶκος in 4th-c. inscriptions from the Hauran,<sup>24</sup> was a guest-house for travelling officers, put up at public expense in order to relieve the towns and villages from the burden of the *metatum* liturgy. Since the officials for whom these facilities were provided were attached to the office of the *dux*, the planning of such buildings fell naturally into the bailiwick of the *dux*.

<sup>22</sup> In 441 the Persians were again attacking the eastern frontier and their campaign was probably expected. It seems that Valentinian's policy to build up the Roman army in the West was matched by Anatolius' attempt to strengthen the *limitanei* in the East (Jones, *LRE* I, 193, 200-3). His efforts may have been directed to strengthen the cities' defenses as well.

<sup>23</sup> The reading Χριστογόνου is most doubtful. It might perhaps be emended into ὑπὸ λαμπροτάτου τρωφούνου (the tribunes ranked as *clarissimi*: Jones, *LRE* I, 640-43) in which case we should have a non-commissioned officer subordinate to a tribune and charged with the command of the fort and its vicinity as lieutenant. For similar *vicarii* see below.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Waddington nos. 2029, 2462, 2463; see also MacAdam (supra n.6) 152.



Cyril of Scythopolis is again helpful in illustrating the procedure. In the *Life of Sabas* chs. 72-73, Cyril describes the provisions made by Justinian, on the request of Sabas, to restore churches destroyed by the Samaritans and to repair damage caused during the revolt of 529-530. The works were supervised by the bishops under the control of the governor of Palaestina Prima, Count Stephen, who was charged with handing out the funds from the provincial coffers, funds that derived from the partial remission of taxes and from punitive confiscations of Samaritan estates. It seems that Stephen was the authority who approved each restoration project and its budget. Sabas made another request, to build a fort in the Judean desert south of his monasteries, in order to protect them from incursions by the Saracens. The money was to come from the same source, but in this case the order to build the fort was to be given to Summus, the *dux Palaestinae*. The most instructive detail of this story is that Summus was ordered not to build the fort, as the monk had asked, but to hand the money for the building to Sabas. Then the holy man died and the money was handed out to his successor, a less energetic individual, who passed it on to the patriarch, who in turn distributed the sum among the various monasteries and the building project came to naught (ch.83). Thus, it seems that the civil and military governors were mainly involved in approving building plans and in budgeting the individual projects, depending upon an explicit order from the emperor if the funds were to come from provincial funds. We will return to the rôle of the emperor when we turn to the question of the financial aspects of an involvement in projects. The responsibility of executing the project (not to speak of the actual supervision of the works) was left to whatever authority existed locally.

The story also shows that the initiative of the building projects could sometimes come from the community through the local leaders, although in Byzantine epigraphy there is no parallel of the *ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος* formula of Roman times. However, in most cases it seems that the main force behind a building initiative was the governor, either by the emperor's orders or under his own steam, urged by the desire of glory recognized by Theodosius' law. The conventional language of the inscriptions is unsuitable to convey the play of forces underlying an operative decision. The governor takes the credit, more or less eponymously, whether he is the planner of a building scheme or just its passive endorser, and generally the intentions and incentives behind the plan are forever hidden from our sight.

## 2. The supervisor of building activity

We may turn now to the question of the actual supervision of building activity. Here too there is a difference between the Roman and Byzantine periods. Roman inscriptions often name a number of executors for each project, even one as simple as setting up an altar or a statue. They are named as *ἐπιμεληταί*, *προνοηταί*, *ἐπίσκοποι*, *πιστοί* and the like, and were either municipal officials or curators entrusted *ad hoc* with a single project. No doubt the conditions of work had not changed much in the later period, and every building project still required a host of inspectors and managers, but at this period local officials are rarely mentioned. Perhaps these tasks were no longer fulfilled by a city's most distinguished men as a public liturgy but delegated to more obscure clerks (obscure to us, at least, because never mentioned). In some rare cases one important personage is named as executor or supervisor of the work: his name appears in the genitive case, introduced by *ἐπί*, *σπουδῇ*, *προνοίᾳ* or *προνοησαμένου*. Among the notables mentioned for this task are lawyers (*σχολαστικοί* or barristers, *ἐκδικοί* or *defensores civitatis*) and medical officers (*ἀρχιατροί*).<sup>25</sup> They did not act in their professional

<sup>25</sup> The term *ἀρχιατρός* designated either a court physician (*archiaterus sacri palatii*) or a doctor maintained by the city to attend the poor and to supervise public health (*archiaterus publicus*): see Jones, *LRE* II, 1012-13. Beside being professionals, they were civil servants, like the advocates (*LRE* I, 507 ff.), and, while they enjoyed immunities and exemptions from civic duties, they were liable to be appointed to special honorable liturgies.

capacity but were either charged *ad hoc* by the city council or acted out of their own goodwill. Sometimes the individual is defined simply as *clarissimus* or *comes* and we cannot guess which office he held, if any, or how he had come by the job of supervising the work — whether as the representative of the governor or of the city. As examples, we may refer to the two inscriptions which pertain to the fortifications in Gerasa and Bostra, quoted above.

It is rare to find a decurion (by the 4th c. he is called *πολιτευόμενος* rather than *βουλευτής*) appointed *ad hoc* as *ἐπιμελητής* to function as supervisor of public works, though it is not completely unknown: a well-known case is the inscription commemorating the new paving (454/5) in front of the theatre of Elusa:

Ἐπὶ Φλαυίου Δημάρχου τοῦ μεγαλοπρεπεστάτου καὶ εὐδοκωτάτου ἄρχοντος ἐγένετο ἡ πρὸ τοῦ θεάτρου πλακῶσις ἕως τῆς προτέρας πλακῶς ἐπιμελείᾳ Ἀβρααμίου Ζηνοβίου πολιτευομένου ἐν ἔτι τμῷ.

A. Negev, *The Greek inscriptions from the Negev* (Jerusalem 1981) no.92 + SEG XXXI, no.1401.

"Under Flavius Demarchus, the most magnificent and illustrious governor, the paving in front of the theatre was made, up to the earlier pavement, by the care of Abraham son of Zenobius the decurion, in year 349 (of provincia Arabia, A.D. 454/5)."

In another case, the *praetorium* of the civil governor was built at Bostra in 490/1 under the care of the *clarissimus* count and decurion Paul:

Ἐπὶ τοῦ μεγαλοπρεπεστάτου κόμητος Ἡσυχίου ἡγεμόνος καὶ σχολαστικοῦ ἐκτίσθη ἐκ θεμελίων τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν πραιτώριον κόμητος Παύλου λαμπριστάτου καὶ πολιτευομένου ἐπιμελουμένου ἐν ἰνδικτικῶν ἡ' ἔτους τπ'.

Sartre, *IGLS* XIII no.9123.

"Under the most magnificent count Hesychius, governor and advocate, the government house was built from the foundations under the supervision of the *clarissimus* count and decurion Paul."

In both cases there is the double mention of the governor on the one hand and the municipal official on the other. The latter functioned as the actual supervisor of the work. The involvement of the former probably differed in these two cases, in spite of the identical phrasing *ἐπί* etc. It seems best to suppose that the governor who resided at Bostra took an active interest in the construction of his own residence, especially since it was probably built with funds from the provincial coffers, for which he had responsibility, whereas it is difficult to suppose that the governor of Palaestina Tertia evinced much concern for a pavement in Elusa (not the provincial capital) which was surely paid for out of city funds.

In addition to these local *honorati* who held no specific office, a municipal notable or official is sometimes mentioned in connection with public works. The terms that occur most often are *πρώτος*, *πατὴρ πόλεως* and *τοποτηρητής*. Some examples follow.

## 1. The *πρώτοι* and *πρωτεύοντες*

In the Roman city the *πρώτοι* or *πρωτοπολίται* seem to have been the members of the local aristocracy or, more specifically, the city councillors. But in the Byzantine period (since the late 4th c.) the *πρωτοπολίται* or *principales*, *primates*, appear as "an inner ring within the city council ... an officially recognized body, a kind of executive committee of the council, which tended to usurp its functions."<sup>26</sup> Formally they were to be elected by the council for a definite period, but it is likely that they were *de facto* a co-opted body without a fixed term of office.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Jones, *LRE* I, 731.

<sup>27</sup> *CTh* 12, 1, 171 (A.D. 412). See Jones, *loc. cit.* and pp.760, 1300-1.



It has been maintained that the *principales* supplanted and superseded the *curiales*:<sup>28</sup> in this case we should take the mention of the title in building inscriptions as a mere indication of status. But to speak of this development as "supersession" is not exact. Though not a proper office, that of *principalis* was an officially recognized function with specific responsibilities on the executive and administrative level, as well as on the decision-making level (e.g. in the election of the city bishop). It is perhaps significant that in a number of 4th-5th c. inscriptions from the Hellenistic term *procurator* is used to indicate the office, or rather tenure, of the *πρωτοί*, the village's financial administrators.<sup>29</sup> The appearance of the verbal form *πρωτεύων* as the translation of *procurator* may also suggest that this was assumed as a temporary charge.<sup>30</sup>

For example, a *procurator* is mentioned in connection with public works. Thus, a text from Aphrodisias refers to all arrangements for the paving of a street and the laying of a new water-pipe: *πρωτεύων τῆς πόλεως ἔθηκεν ἀποφασίσαι ἀποκατασκευάσαι ἐκτατοὺς καὶ πύργους.*

"Under Saviour Jones, the most magnificent count and procurator, the celebrated work of the pavement with the new water-pipe was carried out under the supervision of Saviour son of Marinos, *clarissimus* count and *procurator*, in the 15th indiction, year 585."

G. Roeder, *Z. Samit*, 25-6, 1987-88, 41. The Greek text is still unpublished.

Another 6th-c. inscription, from Caesarea, commemorates the building of a vaulted gateway and staircase. It reads:

Ἐπὶ Φλαυίου Ἐντολίου ἐνδοξοτάτου στρατηγίου καὶ ἀνθυπάτου Φλαυίου Strategius, *spectabilis* father of the city and *πρωτεύων*, [made] the arch together with the wall and the staircase, from city funds, in indiction 10. Good luck.

B. Lifshitz, *RevBibl* 68 (1961) 121-22.

"Under Flavius Entolius, the most glorious commander and proconsul, Flavius Strategius, *spectabilis* father of the city and *πρωτεύων*, [made] the arch together with the wall and the staircase, from city funds, in indiction 10. Good luck."

Both inscriptions refer to utilitarian works, the one of a more modest scale than the other. The former is entrusted to the supervision of a *principalis*, probably as a charge *ad hoc*, while for the latter the magistrate responsible for public works on behalf of the city is mentioned side by side with the governor. This throws some light on the respective functions and possibly the level on which the two officials acted, but give us no clue as to the procedure followed in planning and bringing to execution the two building projects.

<sup>28</sup> A. Cameron, "Demes and factions," *BZ* 67 (1974) 86; id., *Circus factions: blues and greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford 1976) 38. For a critical approach to Cameron's thesis, see J. Gasco, "Les institutions de l'hippodrome en Égypte byzantine," *BIFAO* 76 (1976) 203-6.

<sup>29</sup> These are building inscriptions which contain the formula *ἐπὶ πρωτείας* for a number of individuals who are styled *πρωτῶν*; e.g. SEG VII no. 1168; PAES no. 174. *Πρωτοκωμήται* also appear as an administrative body in the villages, parallel to the *πρωτοί* of the cities: MacAdam (above, n. 6) 155-56; Cameron, "Demes and factions" 86.

<sup>30</sup> Another clue for the progress of the term from the general to the specific may be seen in a 3rd-c. bilingual epitaph from southern Judaea, in which *πρωτοπολίτης* is translated into Aramaic as *resh marvam*, or *resh marim* (*reshamarim*), "chief of the lords" or "chief of the citizens", which suggests an individual position comparable to the *προεδρία*, the chairmanship of the city council. The epitaph comes from Kh. Zif and the city in question was probably Eleutheropolis. See L. Y. Rahmani, "A bilingual ossuary-inscription from Khirbet Zif," *IEJ* 22 (1972) 113-16, and the observations of E. Y. Kutscher and Y. Yadin, *ibid.* 117, 235-36. In the late 4th c. Jerome describes a prominent citizen of Aila (Elath on the Red Sea) who was a lunatic — and therefore could not have held a position of responsibility — by the curious expression 'vir primarius' (*Vita Hilarionis* ch. 18, PL 23, 35). Was he trying to avoid a more common but now too specific term? The Life's Greek translator, Jerome's contemporary Sophronius, follows his lead choosing a most general expression: *ἀνὴρ ἐν πρώτοις* (W. A. Oldfather, *Studies in the text tradition of St. Jerome's Vitae Patrum* [Urbana, Ill. 1943] 318).

## 2. The *πατὴρ πόλεως*

The function of the *πατὴρ πόλεως* (*pater civitatis*) is better known and documented. Originally this functionary was called *curator civitatis* (in Greek *λογιστής*), and was a special commissioner sent by the imperial government to regulate the finances of cities. Since the 4th c., the *curator* of each city was chosen among the members of the local council on the recommendation of the same. Although the *pater civitatis* remained technically not a municipal magistrate but an imperial officer, by Justinian's time the post was in fact elective, at least in the East.<sup>31</sup> The *pater civitatis* administered the city's revenues and was responsible for the upkeep of public streets and buildings.<sup>32</sup> The inscriptions presented here show that he was also involved in new constructions, although not as an independent factor, but only subject to the governor's endorsement. Another *πατὴρ πόλεως* of Caesarea is mentioned in an inscription (mistakenly dated to 538 by its first editor). It reads:

Ἐπὶ Φλαυίου Εὐελπίου τοῦ μεγαλοπρεπεστάτου κόμητος καὶ Ἡλίου λαμπροτάτου πατρὸς τῆς πόλεως καὶ ἡ βασιλικὴ μετὰ καὶ τῆς πλακώσεως καὶ τῆς ψηφώσεως καὶ τῶν βαθμῶν τοῦ Ἀδριανίου γέγοναν ἐν ἰνδικτιῶνος α'. Εὐτυχῶς.

W. J. Moulton, *AASOR* I, 86-90; B. Lifshitz, *RevBibl* 68 (1961) 122-23.

"Under Flavius Euelpidius the most magnificent count and Elias the *clarissimus* father of the city, also the basilica was made, with the paving and the mosaics and the steps of the Hadrianum, in indiction 1. Good luck."

The editor mistook the father of the city for the bishop, and so identified the man with Elias bishop of Caesarea in the 530s. The basilica was a civil building, not a church. The statement that it was "built anew" must be taken with caution; as in the previous text, the works may have had a limited scope.

Another "father of the city" and another civil basilica are mentioned in a building inscription from Sepphoris-Diocaesarea. Again the editor, M. Avi-Yonah, took the official for a bishop and the building for a church. The text reads:

Ἐπὶ Φλαυίου Θεοδώρου Γεωργίου Προκοπίου τοῦ μεγαλοπρεπεστάτου ὑπατικοῦ ἐνηλλάγη ἡ δωματοργία πᾶσα τῆς βασιλικῆς καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ καὶ τῶν β' παραποταμίδων καὶ τῆς διορθώσεως τοῦ πρὸ τῶν θείων σίγνων κίονος καὶ τῶν ἐναλλαγῶν ἐκ τε τοῦ δυσμικοῦ ἀετώματος καὶ τοῦ βορινικοῦ μέρους τῆς ἀψίδος λίθων προνοίᾳ Μαρκελλίνου αἰδέσμοτάτου πατρός ἡμετέρας ἰνδικτιῶνος ια'.

M. Avi-Yonah, *IEJ* 11 (1961) 184-87; B. Lifshitz, *ZDPV* 79 (1963) 95-97; SEG XX no. 417; XXVI no. 1667.

"Under Flavius Theodorus Georgius Procopius, the most magnificent *consularis*, the whole structure of the basilica was changed and erected, together with the two side storerooms and the restoration of the column in front of the imperial statues, and the replacement of stones from the western gable and the northern side of the apse, by the forethought of Marcellinus, the most venerable father [of the city], in the times of the 11th indiction."

Avi-Yonah, followed by Lifshitz, read *πατρ(ιάρχου)* instead of *πατρός* and identified Marcellinus with the bishop of Diocaesarea who subscribed the acts of the Synod of Jerusalem in 518. Consequently he dated the inscription to 517/8, which fell in the 11th indiction.

<sup>31</sup> Jones, *LRE* I, 726-29; II, 1298-99, n. 30.

<sup>32</sup> *CJ* I, 5, 12; 10, 30, 4; *Novella* 128, 16; C. Roueché, "A new inscription from Aphrodisias and the title *πατὴρ τῆς πόλεως*," *GRBS* 20 (1979) 173-85; G. Dagron and D. Feissel, *Inscriptions de la Cilicie* (Paris 1987), Appendice I: "Nouvelles données sur l'institution du *πατὴρ τῆς πόλεως*," 215-25.



Choricus of Gaza uses ἀστυνόμος as a synonym of πατήρ πόλεως, though possibly as an archaizing expression. The ἀστυνόμος is well known at Bostra in the late Roman period, but hitherto, so far as I know, the term has not appeared in Byzantine inscriptions. In an *epithalamium*,<sup>33</sup> the rhetor praises an acquaintance of his, the father of the bridegroom Procopius who was Choricus' disciple. According to Choricus, the man had been elected unanimously to the office of *astynomos* and he had greatly improved the water supply of the city, obviously through the building or restoration of an aqueduct — a typical task for the πατήρ πόλεως.<sup>34</sup>

### 3. The τοποτηρητής and the military administration

Another local official who was involved in building, on the evidence of inscriptions, is the τοποτηρητής. This term is ambiguous etymologically: it means "keeper of a place", both in the sense of "guardian of a city" and in the sense of *locumtenens*. Thus τοποτηρητής may mean "delegate" (in this sense it is often used for representatives of patriarchs in a Synod), or it may mean "deputy" or again "warden". In Greek papyri from Egypt many τοποτηρηταί of cities and even of the *limes* are attested; some of them are κανκελλάριοι of the rank of *clarissimus* or *spectabilis*, and they are apparently civilians.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, Theophanes mentions a τοποτηρητής who was commander of a *castrum* and who headed military operations in Asia Minor.<sup>36</sup> Justinian's *Novellae* refer more than once to the τοποτηρηταί or *loci servatores* whom the governors would appoint to govern the several cities. It is not clear whether these appointees were to act instead of or alongside the municipal officials. In any event, Justinian's efforts to forbid such appointments were not successful.<sup>37</sup> Possibly the powers of the τοποτηρηταί depended on local circumstances and on who the appointer and the appointee were. In two of the three epigraphical occurrences of the term in our region,<sup>38</sup> the τοποτηρητής was a military man, appointed by a δούξ καὶ ἄρχων. In all cases, the τοποτηρητής was involved in building projects. Two almost identical inscriptions from Gerasa, dated to 533, commemorate the building of an Ὠκεανός (a pool or canal connected with a bath-house?), and possibly a λουτρόν or bath-house under the authority of Fl. Sergius, *agens in rebus* and τοποτηρητής.

Ἐπὶ Φλαυίου Ἀναστασίου τοῦ μεγαλοπρεπέστατου καὶ ἐνδοξοτάτου κόμητος) δουκὸς καὶ ἄρχοντος) τὸ β' καὶ Φλαυίου Σεργίου τοῦ καθωσιωμένου) μαγιστριάου καὶ τοποτηρητοῦ ἐγένετο τὸ ἔργον τοῦ δώματος τοῦ Ὀκαιανοῦ ἐκ φιλοτιμίας τοῦ πανλαμπροτάτου Σεργίου τῷ εφ' ἔτεϊ Αὐγούστῳ.  
Welles, *Gerasa* no.278.

"Under Fl. Anastasius, the most magnificent and glorious *comes*, *dux* and governor for the second time, and Fl. Sergius, *devotissimus agens in rebus* and τοποτηρητής, the work of the construction of the pool was done, through the munificence of the *clarissimus* Sergius".

Ibidem, no.277 is identical, except for the name of the building: after δώματος comes a gap, followed by the letters ΡΟΥ. I would suggest restoring τοῦ λουτροῦ.

The *agentes in rebus* were paramilitary personnel, some of them being attached to the offices of the *duces* of the eastern frontier. The rôle of Fl. Sergius in this project is not at all clear,

<sup>33</sup> R. Foerster & E. Richsteig edd. (Leipzig 1929) 87-99.

<sup>34</sup> See the comments of D. Feissel, "Bulletin épigraphique," REG 102 (1989) 505, no.1000, on K. G. Holum, "Flavius Stephanus, proconsul of Byzantine Palestine," ZPE 63 (1986) 231-39.

<sup>35</sup> F. Presigke, *Wörterbuch* III. Band (Berlin 1931) 171. However, the τοποτηρητής of the *limes* must have been attached to the *officium* of the *dux limitis*.

<sup>36</sup> *Chronographia*, C. de Boor ed. (Leipzig 1883) 393.

<sup>37</sup> *Novellae* 17,10; 28,4; 29,2; 128,29; 134.

<sup>38</sup> There are in fact four, but two refer to the same man.

especially since it is not apparent whether he himself was the donor or whether it was another individual of the same name. Incidentally, this is the one instance of private munificence in a Byzantine public building that I have found in the region. Another τοποτηρητής was responsible for the construction of a private bath at Ma'in in the *Provincia Arabia*. The inscription says:

Ἐπὶ Φλαυίου Μαρτυρίου λαμπροτάτου καὶ περιφλιέπτου τριούνου καὶ τοποτηρητοῦ ἀπὸ θεμελίων ἐκτίσθη καὶ ἐτελώθη τοῦτο τὸ πρῶτον ἐπὶ τῆς ια' ἰνδικτιώνος).

Gatier, *Inscriptions de la Jordanie* no.162.

"Under Fl. Martyrius, *clarissimus* and *spectabilis tribunus* and τοποτηρητής, this private bath was built and completed from the foundations in the 11th indiction."

The third τοποτηρητής is known from a new and still unpublished inscription from Scythopolis, the text of which was kindly communicated to me by the excavators. The text opens with a cross and says:

"The work was done from the foundations under the *spectabilis* Constantinus the τοποτηρητής"

This inscription was found reused and it is impossible to know to which building it originally belonged. Likewise, there is no way to know whether the τοποτηρητής was a military man or a civilian.

It may be mere chance that both the military τοποτηρηταί are involved in the construction of baths, or there may be a connection with the law found in the constitution *de metatis* (CTh VII.11, two decrees from 406 and 417, revived in CJ I.47.1) forbidding all military officers beneath the rank of *illustres* to claim access to private baths as part of their billeting privileges. This meant that travelling officers had to depend upon public baths or upon bathing facilities attached to the guest-house (ἐπαντητήριον). A double inscription from Kom Ombos in Upper Egypt mentions the building and maintenance for travelling soldiers of a ἐπαντητήριον with annexed bath and latrines, under the patronage of the *dux Thebaidis* and under the care of a group of military officers, one of them styled τοποτηρητής.<sup>39</sup> Possibly also the above-mentioned τοποτηρηταί of Gerasa and Ma'in were acting on behalf of fellow-soldiers rather than in their capacity as city governors. If so, their involvement in public building should be interpreted in a more limited way.

Those two men, however, are not the only members of the military administration to participate in public building. A mosaic inscription from Beersheba mentions the renovation of a building of unknown character<sup>40</sup> under the authority of two men called βοηθοὶ σκρυφανδαρίων: they must be *subscribandarii*, low-grade clerks attached to the office of the *dux*.<sup>41</sup>

Ἐπὶ Φλαβίου Πέτρου καὶ Ἀναστασίου λαμπροτάτων βοηθῶν) σκρυφανδαρίων ἀνεκτελέσθη).

P. Figueras, *LibAnn* 36 [1986] 273-76.

"Under Fl. Petrus and Fl. Anastasius, *clarissimi subscribandarii*, (this building) was renovated."

A series of inscriptions at Shivta (ancient Sobata?) mention a certain John, *clarissimus vicarius*, who seems to have been something of a local boss. He resided in Shivta with his family over a long period from the end of the 6th to the early 7th c. and his sons were buried there in the mid 7th c. He is mentioned in two building inscriptions, one in the Northern Church, where he appears with a priest as executor of the mosaics of a chapel (see above p.316). The other inscription (not found *in situ*) refers to the erection of an unspecified building — not a church, as

<sup>39</sup> SB no.7475 = SEG VIII no.780.

<sup>40</sup> *Christian News from Israel* 18, 1-2 (1967) 42-43. Although the building was oriented to the east, there is no reason to believe that it had a religious character.

<sup>41</sup> For the *subscribandarii*, see D. Feissel, "Bulletin épigraphique," REG 100 (1987) 379, no.528.



the editor maintained, since it was put up by the *priores*, a collective term for the officers of a unit of *limitanei*,<sup>42</sup> and by John the *vicarius*.

+ CΩΝ ΘΕΩ ΕΥΕΝΕΤΩ ΤΟΙΤΩ ΤΩ ΕΡΓΩΝ ΕΠΙ ΤΩΝ ΛΕΜΠΡΟΤΕΙΩΝ ΠΡΩΤΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΠΙ ΦΛΑΟΥΙΟΥ  
ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ (ΣΧΟΛΑΣΤΙΚΟΥ) ΠΡΩΤΟΥ ΕΠΙΣΤΑΤΩΝΟΣ ΥΨΗΛΟΥ ΥΠΕΡΒΕΤΕΙΩΝ ΥΨ ΤΟΥ ΕΤΟΥΣ Ψ +  
A. Neger, *The Greek inscriptions of the Negev* no. 75; SEG XXXI no. 1453.

"With God's help this work was done under the *clarissimi priores* and under John son of Stephan, the *vicarius*, in the third indiction on the thirteenth of the month Hyperbeteans of the year 411."

In the era of *Anathia*, used in most inscriptions in *Siirta*, AE 400 corresponds to AD. 505/6 which is divided between the 13th and the 14th indiction. On the other hand, the era of *Semihempolis* fits the chronological requirements: year 400 of this era corresponds to AD. 599-600, in the 3rd indiction, within the period to which belong most of the dated inscriptions of *Siirta*, and within the span of activity of John the *vicarius*, as is determined by the other dated inscriptions that mention his name. In my view, while *vicarius* may have the same meaning as *τακτοῦντις* in its reference to *λοκωτάκτες*, here the terms are not equivalent: presumably John was an ordinary military vicar, deputy of a *tribunus* and so second in command of a *cameris*. He may have held authority in *Siirta* as the head of a unit of *limitanei* who had received lands in this agricultural zone. Since the time of Justinian, *vicarii*, although non-commissioned officers, were often invested with full command since tribunes were often absentees.<sup>43</sup> In small towns that had originated as forts (e.g. Ziza and Umm er Rasas), local leaders who were originally military commanders and who are still called *ἐρχων τοῦ τόπου* in the 8th c. are known (see pp. 314 and 316).

#### Resumé

In short, we may identify two levels of action in the public building inscriptions: there is the command given by a governor, and the execution carried out by a local individual. The latter can be a notable specially appointed for a specific project, or a city magistrate acting on the authority invested to his office; but there is no evidence to show that municipal magistrates could initiate a building by their own powers, without the governor's endorsement. Again, the executor can be an appointed officer who in this part of the empire usually belongs to the military — whatever the reason may be. Yet since our sample is small, too much weight should not be placed on it.

An exception — in some respects — that deserves to be mentioned is the Mu'awia inscription discovered in the bath-house at Hammat Gader:

+ Ἐπὶ Ἀβδάλλα Μαάβια ἀμήρα ἀλμουμένην ἀπελωύθη καὶ ἀνενεώθη ὁ κλίβανος τῶν ἐνταῦθα διὰ Ἀβδάλλα υἱοῦ Ἀβουασέμου συμβούλου, ἐν μηνὶ Δεκεμβρίῳ πέμπτῃ, ἡμέρᾳ δευτέρᾳ, (ἡδ(ικτωῶνος) ζ', ἔτους τῆς κολωνίας) α' κατὰ Ἀράβας(ς) ἔτους μβ', εἰς ἴασην τῶν νοσοῦντων, σπουδῇ Ἰωάννου (μεζότερου) Γαδαρηνοῦ.

Y. Hirschfeld & G. Solar, *IEJ* 31 (1981) 202-4; J. Green & Y. Tsafir, *IEJ* 32 (1982) 94-96; SEG XXX no. 1687; XXXII no. 1501.

"Under Mu'awia, servant of Allah, chief of the faithful, the hotwater system of these (baths) was cleared and renewed through Abdalla son of 'Abu Hashim, governor, on December 5, Monday, indiction 6, in the year of the city 726, year 42 of the Arabs, for the healing of the sick, by the zeal of John the Gadarene, steward."

The Mu'awia inscription dated exactly to December 5, 662, is exceptional both because of its late date and because it mentions three levels of authority — the caliph with full Muslim

attributes (servant of Allah, chief of the faithful) and introduced by the word *ἐπί*; the *σύμβουλος* or governor, who is introduced by the word *διὰ*; and the local man through whose *σπουδῇ* the work was carried out. The last is John the Gadarene, but his title is too abbreviated to be recognized with certainty — there is a *mu* with overhanging *iota*. Probably the best suggestion<sup>44</sup> is *μεζότερος*, meaning originally a butler or steward of a private estate, but in the Byzantine and early Islamic period in Egypt and Palestine found as the name of a village magistrate. Although a citizen of Gadara, in his capacity as *μεζότερος* John was probably in charge of the suburb where the bath-house was located. As to the *σύμβουλος*, in Greek documents of the early Islamic period the title pertains to the governor of a province or *jund*. In this case, Abdalla Abu Hashim (or 'Asim) would be the governor of al-Urdunn, corresponding to *Palaestina Secunda*.<sup>45</sup> However, in 7th-c. papyri from Nessana the title *σύμβουλος* is given to the governor of the district (*kura*) who resided in the county seat of Gaza.<sup>46</sup> Accordingly, Abdalla may have been no more than a district chief.

#### Private patrons

The inscriptions may point to another kind of involvement in public building, that of a private patron. Sometimes we find the mention of a city notable acting out of goodwill as a patron. I mentioned before the appearance of personages such as *σχολαστικοί* through whose *σπουδῇ* or *προνοία* or both a building is erected. It is not always possible to establish whether the individual involved was acting freely or under a special charge. When no specifics are given, I tend to assume that he is a representative chosen by the city, since in this period municipal liturgies were not willingly undertaken. In some cases, however, the context suggests that the individual involved was acting in the rôle of patron. I stress that I am not speaking here of private largesse. The best example is provided by the inscriptions given above (p. 318) commemorating the renovation of the city wall of Scythopolis in the 520s. One text says:

"With a grant made by the imperial liberality at the request of the most glorious Fl. Arsenius, also the fabric of the city-wall was renovated, in the time of Fl. Anastasius, the most distinguished governor, in the third indiction."

The second text is identical except for the name of the governor, Fl. Leo, and the indiction (the fourth or possibly the first). The *gloriosissimus* Arsenius, by birth a Samaritan of Scythopolis, is well known from Procopius of Caesarea, Cyril, and Liberatus of Carthage (cf. *PRLE* II, s.v.).<sup>47</sup> He was a senator in Constantinople, but he had retained close ties with his family at home and he continued to act in favour of his mother city until his father Silvanus was lynched by the local Christians during the Samaritan revolt of 529. The inscriptions indicate that he procured a grant from Justin I in order to repair the city wall. Two new inscriptions pertaining to the same family recently found at Scythopolis (unpublished) may be interpreted by reference to the other. One, a metric inscription, ascribes to Silvanus the restoration of a building falling down with age by using "the riches of Anastasius, the wealthy king". The other commemorates the building of a civil basilica under the governor Entrichius in the ninth indiction by the *scholastici* Silvanus and Sallustius, sons of the *scholasticus* Arsenius, ἐκ δωρεᾶς Φλαουίου Ἀναστασίου αὐτοκράτορος. The date is early 6th c. and the *scholastici* Silvanus and Arsenius were the father and uncle of Arsenius who built the wall. They too did not build with their own money given as largesse to their city, nor did they act as supervisors: apparently what

<sup>44</sup> J. Bingen, *Byzantion* 54 (1984) 369-70.

<sup>45</sup> I. Hasson, "Remarques sur l'inscription de l'époque de Mu'awiya à Hammat Gader," *IEJ* 32 (1982) 100-1.

<sup>46</sup> *PNessana* = C. J. Kraemer, *Non-literary papyri*, in H. D. Colt (ed.), *Excavations at Nessana III* (Princeton 1958) 58,10; 72,1; 73,1; 75,3; 158,3.

<sup>47</sup> Martindale, *PLRE* II, 152-54.

<sup>42</sup> See Preisigke, *Wörterbuch* Bd. III, 218.

<sup>43</sup> Preisigke, *Wörterbuch*, Bd. III 98, 205; Jones, *LRE* I 643, 675; II 1279, n.158.



they did was to use their connections at the imperial court to obtain a special grant to renovate and build public edifices at Scythopolis.

#### Who paid for public building?

This brings us to the question: Who pays for public building? Two sources are explicitly mentioned, τὰ πολιτικά, the city funds, and τὰ δημοτικά, or τὰ δημόσια, ὁ δημόσιος λόγος, the provincial treasury. The city funds came from the city revenues which, through a law of Zeno, were administered by the πατήρ τῆς πόλεως. Anastasius seems to have given over the management of municipal revenues to the *vindices*, who controlled tax collection in every city on behalf of the central government, and who were also responsible for the apportionment of municipal revenues for the city's needs, but it is unclear how far this affected the city's freedom of action in the actual expenditure; after all, the building and maintenance needs of the cities could not be ignored. In the early days of his reign, Justinian ordered the governors to take upon themselves the upkeep of public buildings in the cities, and to maintain the cities' grain supply, by using the city revenues for this purpose. Later, in 545, Justinian reverted to Zeno's rule.<sup>48</sup> An inscription from Caesarea mentions public building financed by the city's funds (see above p.323), and another from Scythopolis mentions building accomplished without making use of these funds (see above p.319). It is most unlikely that in this case the governor benevolently paid for the building himself; rather, he found an alternative source of money, perhaps through appropriation of Samaritan inheritance,<sup>49</sup> or through punitive confiscation of Samaritan properties after the revolt,<sup>50</sup> or by gaining access to provincial funds.

Provincial funds were used for municipal building in some particular instances by special licence granted by the emperor. In fact in many cases the "imperial grant" (φιλοτιμία, δωρεά) did not consist in a transfer of funds from the emperor's purse to the city but simply in the permission granted to draw funds from the provincial treasury for municipal needs. This is clear from the sources. There is the grant given by Justinian to Palestine through Sabas, mentioned above p.322, so that the damage of the Samaritan revolt could be repaired, a fort be built in the Judean desert, a hospital in Jerusalem, and the Nea completed. In addition to a reduction of taxes, the grant consisted in permission to draw the necessary funds from ὁ δημόσιος λόγος. The epigraphical counterpart of Cyril's report is found in the Nea inscription that mentions Justinian's φιλοτιμία.

Καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἔργον ἐφιλοτιμήσατο ὁ εὐσεβ(έστατος) ἡμῶν βασιλεὺς Φλ(άουιος) Ἰουστινιανός, προνοία καὶ σπουδῇ Κωνσταντίνου ὁσιωτάτου πρεσβ(υτέρου) καὶ ἡγουμέ(νου), ἱδ(κτωῶνος) ιγ'.

N. Avigad, *IEJ* 27 (1977) 145-51; *SEG* XXVII no.1015

"This work too donated our most pious emperor Fl. Justinian, through the provision and care of Constantine, most religious priest and abbot, in the 13th indiction".

At Bostra, possibly because it was the provincial capital, provincial funds were employed on a large scale. There are no less than 10 inscriptions celebrating Justinian's φιλοτιμία, through

the metropolitan John, which resulted in the erection of a whole series of buildings including churches, an aqueduct, fortifications, and others. The guilds of goldsmiths and silversmiths were made responsible for the execution of some of these projects, and in one case the giveaway phrase ἐκ τῶν δημοτικῶν appears, together with the emperor's φιλοτιμία:

Ἐκ φιλοτιμίας τοῦ φιλοχρίστου ἡμῶν δεσπότης Ἰουστινιανοῦ, ἀνυσθ(είσης) διὰ Ἰωάννου ἀγ(ω)γάτου μητροπ(ολίτου), ἐκτίσθη διὰ Δουσαρίου καὶ Ἰοβίου προν(οητῶν) χρυσοχ(όων) προβά(ιτων) παρὰ τῶν δημ(ω)τικῶν. "Ετους υλδ'.

Sartre, *IGLS* XIII no.9129.

"By a largesse of our Christ-loving lord Justinian, granted through the most holy metropolitan John, (this building) was erected, under the supervision of Dousarios and Job, certified goldsmiths, from the provincial funds. Year 434 (A.D. 539/40)."

It is possible, however, that in certain cases the imperial munificence really was a donation. One of the inscriptions commemorating the renovation of the bath-house at Hammat Gader by the governor Mucius Alexander diffusely praises Anastasius' concern with the building; another speaks explicitly of a grant (μέγα δῶρον):

Μούκιος Ἀλέξανδρος | πανυπεύροχος ἡγεμονήων

4 θέσκελον ἤνυσεν ἔργον, | ὃν ἔτρεφεν Καίσαρος ἄστυ,

δεξάμενος μέγα δῶρον | Ἀναστασίου βασιλῆος.

L. Di Segni & Y. Hirschfeld, *IEJ* 36 (1986) 258-60.

"Mucius Alexander, most eminent of governors, accomplished this wondrous work, he whom the city of Caesar nourished, having received a great gift from the emperor Anastasius."

In this case, money may really have been paid out of the emperor's purse, since literary sources inform us that, after the Persian war, in 505, the former *praepositus sacri cubiculi*, Urbicius, was sent out on a special mission to Syria and Palestine, bringing large sums of gold for the relief of the provinces ravaged by the incursions of Persia's Saracen allies. Anastasius however was exceptional in his liberality in promoting and financing public works, and is extolled by historians and panegyrists as a builder on a prodigious scale.<sup>51</sup>

As for private munificence, apart from offerings to religious buildings explicit evidence is hard to come by, yet it is difficult to think of reasons why benefactors should have been shy about commemorating their largesse to public buildings. I can offer only the one example cited above, the φιλοτιμία of the *clarissimus* Sergius at Gerasa, and perhaps also the φιλοτιμία of an ἀρχιατρός from Beersheba:

+ Καὶ τοῦτο τὸ νέον ἔργον γέγονεν ἐκ τῆς φιλοτιμίας Στεφάνου τοῦ σοφοτάτου καὶ ἐνδοξ(οτάτου) ἀρχιατροῦ τοῦ θεῖου Παλατίου +

F. M. Abel, *RevBibl* 18 (1909) 104-5, no.11.

"Also this new work was done by the munificence of Stephen, the most learned and most glorious chief-surgeon of the sacred Palace".

But his dedication, engraved on a sandstone plaque, was not found *in situ*, and there is nothing to show that it did not come from a religious building. In fact, the editor, F. M. Abel, did not hesitate to ascribe the text to a "fondation pieuse". No other term is used (for example, φιλανθρωπία never occurs); προσφορά and καρποφορία are reserved for donations made to churches and monasteries.

<sup>51</sup> Jones, *LRE* I 235-37. For a collection of the sources on Anastasius' building see L. Di Segni & Y. Hirschfeld, "Four Greek inscriptions from Hammat Gader from the reign of Anastasius," *IEJ* 36 (1986) 263-65.

<sup>48</sup> Jones, *LRE* I, 236, 759.

<sup>49</sup> A law issued by Justinian in 529 or soon after barred Samaritans who refused to convert from inheriting: *CJ* 1.5.17. The exact date of the edict is unknown: it was issued between 527 and 530, and according to Procopius of Caesarea (*Arcana* XI, 14-30) it immediately preceded the Samaritan revolt, of which it was the direct cause. On the other hand, according to Cyril of Scythopolis (*Life of Sabas* ch.71, ed. Schwartz, 174), Justinian took this measure after the Samaritans' defeat, in order to punish them. Justinian himself in *Novella* 129 refers to the edict as a punishment (ἐπιτίμιον) for the Samaritans' 'insolence' towards the Christians, which in itself is not a proper term for the bloodbath that was the revolt.

<sup>50</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Life of Sabas* ch.73, ed. Schwartz, 177.





Just as we began this paper with members of the clergy involved in church building, so let us end with their involvement in civil buildings. Not surprisingly, the city's bishop made his presence felt also in the field of public building. Choricus praises bishop Marcianus' activity in civil building at Gaza.<sup>52</sup> I have already referred to the part played by John, metropolitane of Bostra, in the construction of an aqueduct, fortifications, and other items on Justinian's order and under his bounty. At Scythopolis bishop Theodore in 558/559 renovated a bath-house and allotted it to lepers:

Ἐπειδὴ οὗτος ὁ ποιμὴν λουτρὰ καὶ νοσοῦντων νέμεται τοῖς τὴν ἀσθενεῖαν τῆς λέπτης νόσον  
ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ ἀποκαταστήσει ὁ θεὸς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.  
M. Ait. 10000 15/13 (1000 127-28)

"Theophile the shepherd, renovating the bath-house, allots it to those that are sick with the pitiful sickness of leprosy. In the time of the seventh indiction, year 622."

This may be viewed as an act of charity, and as such becoming to a bishop, but in fact it was a question of public health since at that time lepers could still be seen washing in the public baths.<sup>53</sup> At Gerasa bishop Placius built a bath in 454/5,<sup>54</sup> and bishop Paul erected a gaol for accused prisoners awaiting trial.<sup>55</sup> Again, since the care of prisoners and supervision of the city gaol were among the recognized duties of bishops (not to speak of the fact that the episcopal court had the power to imprison people), in a sense the construction of a gaol can be seen as pertaining to a bishop's rôle. But bishops did not engage only in buildings directly connected with their duties: a recently-discovered inscription from Sepphoris commemorates the paving of a portico along the public street by the local bishop (see p.172). The bishop must decidedly be counted among municipal authorities (officially too, since he participated in the election of the city officers with the *πρωτεύοντες*), and he was without comparison the most influential and mightiest city magistrate and the one with the widest scope of powers.

Owing to the concentration of research in the major centres, nowadays we have a better knowledge of the state of affairs in the great cities, where prominent citizens were still ready to assume municipal offices, particularly those which were not onerous. Perhaps in the smaller towns municipal life was at a low ebb, and, in the absence of a strong and capable leading class, the bishop and clergy took upon themselves part of the civic burdens. Future archaeological work in the small and medium-sized towns may produce evidence for a deeper involvement of the church in public building towards the end of Byzantine rule in these provinces.

<sup>52</sup> Choricus of Gaza, *Laudatio Marciani* II, 16, R. Foerster & E. Richsteig, edd. (Leipzig 1929) 32.

<sup>53</sup> This is attested by the Life of Symeon Stylite the younger, ch.219 (P. Van den Ven, *La vie ancienne de S. Siméon Stylite le jeune* [Subsidia hagiographica 32] vol. I, 187-88); and Antoninus Placentinus (*Itinerarium* chs.7, 10 [CCSL 175, 132, 134]) observed the lepers at Hammat Gader washing in the public bath-house, although by themselves. On the efforts of the city to eject from the bath-houses and other public places people who suffered from deforming illness, such as elephantiasis (leprosy?) and breast cancer, see John Chrysostom, *Ad Stagrium a daemone vexatum* III, 13, PG 47, 490.

<sup>54</sup> Welles, *Gerasa* no.296.

<sup>55</sup> SEG XXXV no.1571.

## Inscriptions from the imperial revenue office of Byzantine Caesarea Palaestinae

Kenneth G. Holum

The ruins of Caesarea Palaestinae, capital of Roman and Byzantine Palestine, have brought forth a rich epigraphical harvest.<sup>1</sup> Among the outstanding finds of recent years is a group of Greek texts from the city's Byzantine period (6th c.) set into the mosaic pavements of a building to the south of the Crusader fortifications (figs. 1-2). The more recent excavators refer to this as the "Public Record Building"<sup>2</sup> or "Archive Building",<sup>3</sup> but A. Negev, who first discovered it in 1961, identified the building tentatively as a monastic complex or some other "bâtiment public chrétien", or even as the building that housed the famous library of Origen, Pamphilus, and Eusebius, known to have existed at Caesarea.<sup>4</sup> The latter interpretation has naturally provoked more than archaeological interest.<sup>5</sup> The inscriptions prove, however, that the building was never a library, nor strictly an archive, but most likely housed part of the *officium* of the proconsul (civil governor) of Palaestina Prima, known to have been stationed at Caesarea. This suggests that other much disturbed remains in the vicinity may belong to the governor's palace (*praetorium*) of Caesarea mentioned in two literary sources (cited below n.33). Further, the inscriptions bring new evidence for the organization of the provincial administration of Palestine in the last century before the Muslim conquest.

Negev excavated the N side of a large group of structures south of the Crusader city in 1961, including part of the "Archive Building". In several brief notices he described the remains as "a large network of buildings ... consisting of a portico, many rooms and courtyards, with an apse at the western end facing the sea."<sup>6</sup> The tessellated pavements of these buildings contained mosaic inscriptions, one of which encouraged the reader with a common expression of welcome:<sup>7</sup>

[εὖ]τυχῶς εἰσελθε χαίρων  
"With good fortune, enter rejoicing!"

According to Negev, this inscription appeared in a pavement just outside the eastern entrance to a "long hall" oriented E-W and terminating in the apse to the west. A second inscription, set in

- 1 See C. M. Lehmann and K. G. Holum, *The Greek and Latin inscriptions of Caesarea Maritima* (forthcoming).
- 2 E.g. R. J. Bull, E. Krentz and O. J. Störck, "The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima: ninth season, 1980," *BASOR* Suppl. 24 (1986) 34.
- 3 K. Holum, R. Hohlfelder, R. J. Bull and A. Raban, *King Herod's dream* (New York 1988) 169, 171; R. J. Bull, E. Krentz, O. J. Störck and M. Spiro, "The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima: tenth season, 1982," *BASOR* suppl. 27 (1990) 78.
- 4 "The palimpsest of Caesarea Maritima," *ILN* 243 (1963) 731, concluding "Should its identification as the remains of the famous library of Origen, later used by Eusebius, be dismissed as a preposterous hypothesis?"; see also "Inscriptions hébraïques, grecques et latines de Césarée Maritime," *RBibl* 78 (1971) 256-57. For the library, cf. T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA 1981) 93-94.
- 5 E.g. J. A. McGuckin, "Caesarea Maritima as Origen knew it," in R. J. Daly (ed.), *Origeniana quinta. Papers of the 5th International Origen Congress, Boston College, 14-18 August 1989* (Louvain 1992) 19-21.
- 6 *IEJ* 11 (1961) 82; "Césarée Maritime," *Bible et Terre Sainte* 41 (1961) 14; *RBibl* 69 (1962) 415; *ILN* 243 (1963) 731; *RBibl* 78 (1971) 256-58.
- 7 *Ibid.* 257-58, pl. VI, no. 31.



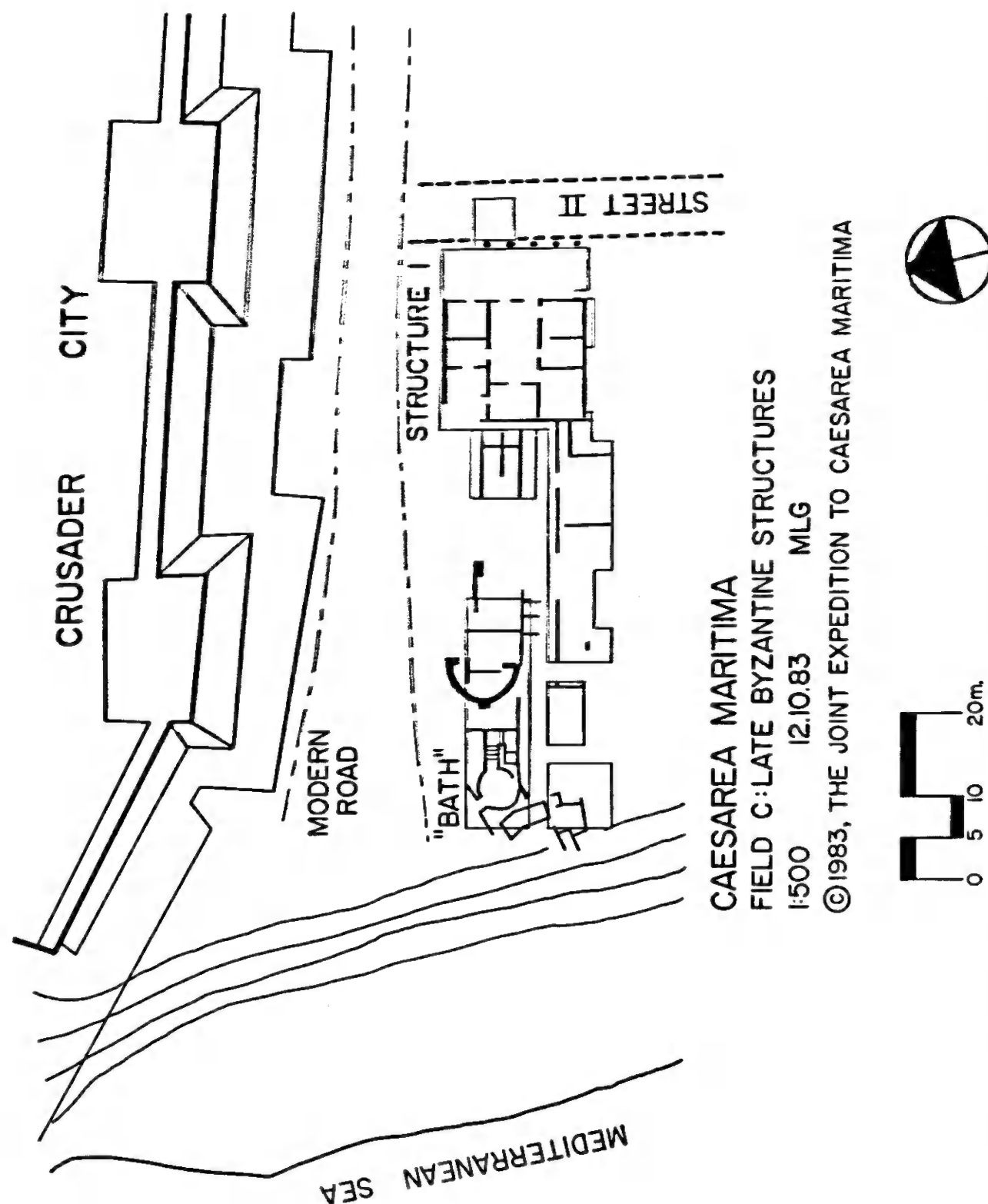


Fig.1. Byzantine structures of the 6th-7th c. in Field C (plan M. L. Govaars, Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima, made in 1983).

the floor of a "small chamber" to the S of the same "long hall", quoted Romans 13:3.<sup>8</sup>

θέλεις μὴ φοβίσθαι τὴν ἐξουσίαν, τὸ ἀγαθὸν ποιεῖ  
 "If you would not fear the authority, then do good!"

Negev dated the buildings — the portico, "long hall", apse, and other rooms and courtyards — to Caesarea's Byzantine period (c.330-640).

From 1971 to 1987 the American Joint Expedition conducted larger scale excavations in the vicinity of Negev's 1961 soundings, designating the sector Field C (fig.1). Negev's "long hall" and the inscription at its eastern entrance had disappeared, presumably beneath the gravel roadway that now skirts the southern defenses of the Crusader city. South of this roadway the newer excavations exposed more of the "network of buildings" first discovered in 1961.<sup>9</sup> To the west of a well-built apse a circular chamber appeared associated with a tank on the seaward side and to the east a stairway leading from the chamber to an upper level. The tank and a basin within the circular chamber suggested to the Joint Expedition that these remains were a late Byzantine "lavatory" or "bath". The pavement of the circular pavement contained a mosaic inscription in a medallion:<sup>10</sup>

Ἀγδρέου ἐνδοξω(τάτου) φιλοκτίστου ἀνθυπάτου πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη  
 "May the years of the most glorious proconsul Andreas, devoted to building, be many!"

In the eastern sector of Field C the new excavations revealed part of a N-S street ("Street II") composed of paving stones laid in a herringbone pattern, it too dated late in the Byzantine period. This was a major thoroughfare, rebuilt in the 6th c., that extended southward toward the Herodian theater.<sup>11</sup>

Along the western curb of the street in Field C, evidence for 5 columns has turned up on a stylobate positioned appropriately for the southward extension of Negev's "Portico" (figs. 1-2). To the W of the stylobate, the Joint Expedition unearthed a tessellated "courtyard", in the northward extension of which Negev presumably found the inscription of welcome. It appears that one approached the entrance to Negev's "long hall" through the same colonnade flanking the street and across the same tessellated court or walkway. Hence for the most part the positions and orientation of Negev's structures can be established with reasonable certainty. The only exception is the apse that terminated Negev's "long hall" on the west. Negev's operations certainly exposed the apse near the Andreas inscription (fig.1), but this apse lies too far to the south and west to have been associated with a "long hall", now concealed beneath the modern roadway, that was oriented E-W and could be entered on the east from the street.<sup>12</sup>

#### The "Archive Building" (fig.2)

Ranged along the S side of this "long hall", Negev reported several "small chambers", in one of which he found the medallion inscription quoting Romans 13:3. In 1971 and subsequent seasons the Joint Expedition re-exposed the inscription and the "small chambers", excavated a number of additional rooms south of them, and dug probes through the tessellated floors of

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 256-57, pl.VI, no.30.

<sup>9</sup> So far, little has been published. See R. Bull, *The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima: preliminary reports in microfiche* (Madison, NJ 1982) chaps. 5-6; Bull, Krentz and Storvick (supra n.2) 31-42; Bull, Krentz, Storvick and Spiro (supra n.3) 71-78; Holum, Hohlfelder, Raban and Bull (supra n.3) 169-71. The Joint Expedition refers to the period 450-550 as the "Middle Byzantine" period and 550-614 as "Late Byzantine", whence the terminology in figs. 1-2.

<sup>10</sup> K. Holum, "Andreas philoktistes: a proconsul of Byzantine Palestine," *IEJ* 36 (1986) 61-64, suggesting that the circular room was just an antechamber leading to the staircase.

<sup>11</sup> R. C. Wiemken and K. G. Holum, "The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima: eighth season, 1979," *BASOR* 244 (1981) 27-52.

<sup>12</sup> The author thanks Professor Negev for discussions on these structures during July 1984.



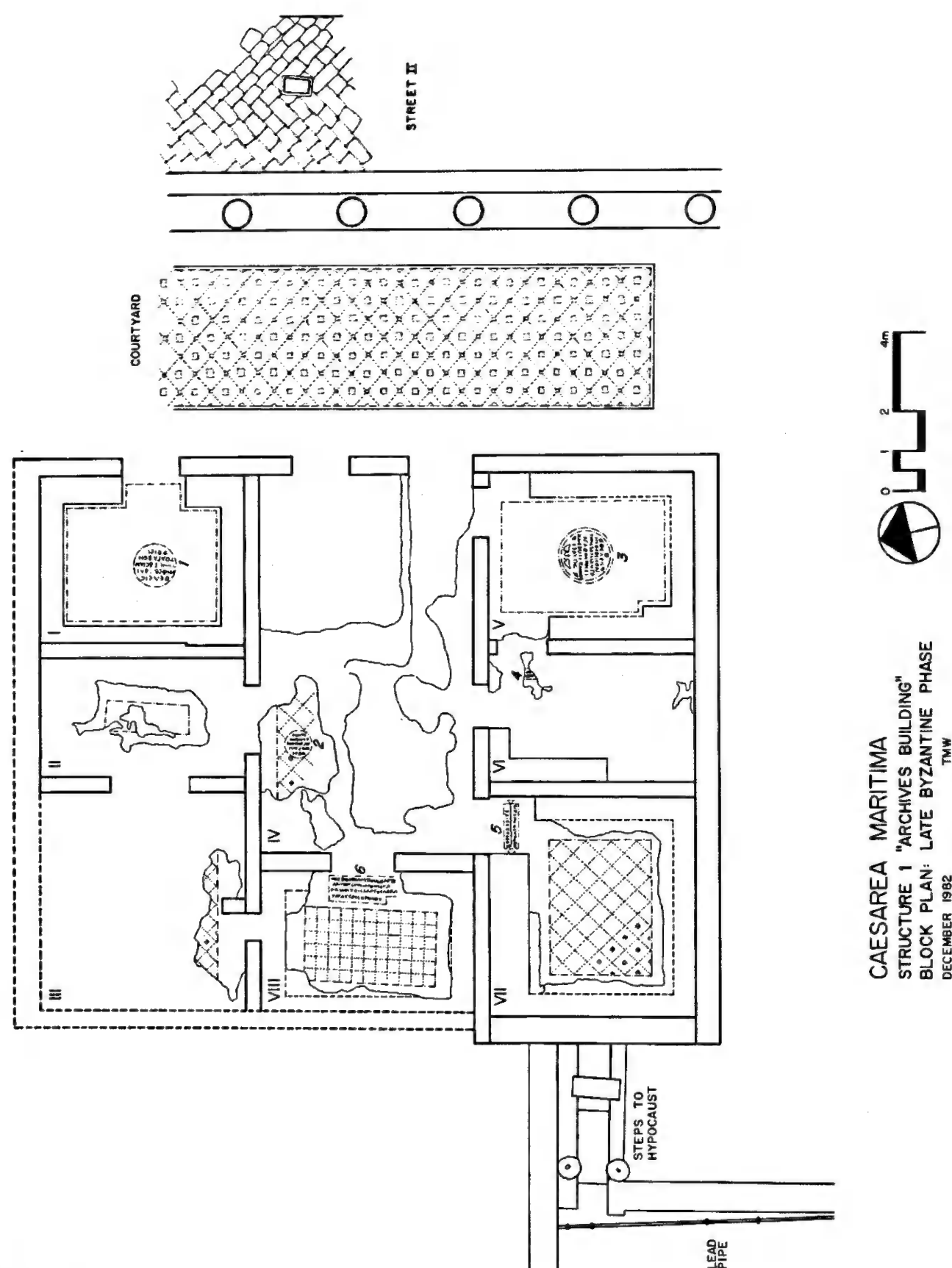


Fig. 2. "Archives Building", plan in the 6th-7th c. phase (Plan T. M. Wilkinson, Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima, made in 1982).

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several rooms in search of ceramic and numismatic dating evidence. What emerged was an integrated building, designated Structure 1 by the Joint Expedition, that was probably constructed early in the 4th c. and remained in service until well into the 7th c.

The "Archive Building" measures 14.7 x 18.5 m and consists of 7 rooms (I-III, V-VIII) arranged around a central hall (IV). Negev's inscription quoting Romans 13:3 is inscription 1 in room I on the northeast, confirming that the "long hall" he discovered lay to the north of Structure I and of the apse to the west. Although the surviving foundations and wall courses of Structure I permit no conclusions about the superstructure, it is not unlikely that the builders left at least part of the central hall open to provide interior lighting. The building would thus have resembled a "courtyard house" of a type familiar in Roman and Byzantine Palestine and the vicinity,<sup>13</sup> but this was not likely to be a domestic building. The arrangement of the doorways is not entirely clear, but in the 6th c. two doors in the E façade opened into the central hall (IV) and one into room I, which in this period could be reached only from the courtyard to the east. The other rooms all opened from the central hall except room III, accessible through rooms II and VIII. Another entrance to the archive building probably existed in the western exterior wall of room VIII. Although at some point during the building's occupation a curtain wall closed the building from this direction, two of the inscriptions to be discussed below (2 and especially 6) were so oriented as to be read conveniently by persons entering the building from the west and departing eastward through the central hall.

Two additional features of Structure I require special attention. First, tessellation covered the floors of all the rooms, including the central hall. Probes through this tessellation revealed one or (in some places) two further tessellated surfaces beneath the topmost one and yielded ceramic evidence (unpublished) that even the lowest of the three sequential surfaces was laid after c.450.<sup>14</sup> This alone suggests a 6th-c. date for the topmost surface, and appears to preclude any connection with the library of Origen, Pamphilus and Eusebius. The latest tessellated surface was made of large (18 per 10cm<sup>3</sup>) cream-colored tesserae in the type of pavement commonly associated by the excavators with the last period of Caesarea's Byzantine history (c.550-640). Further, in room V a crude floor of sandstone slabs had been laid over the latest tessellation incorporating inscription 3 (figs. 2, 4; see further below), a Christian text that might have offended the Zoroastrians or Muslims who conquered Caesarea in the 7th c.<sup>15</sup> Hence the topmost pavements, with the inscriptions, were likely to have been in use up to 614, the beginning of the conquest period, and can be dated with some confidence to the 6th and early 7th c. Second, the excavators found evidence that "benches" had been constructed against one or more walls in rooms I and V-VIII (figs. 2, 4). Some 25-40 cm in height, these benches were appropriate for seating, or perhaps for use as platforms to support *armaria* (bookshelves) or other furniture for storage.<sup>16</sup> The topmost tessellation extends up to the benches but not beneath them, and mosaic patterns in this surface reserve the areas of the benches, so the benches

- <sup>13</sup> Y. Hirschfeld, *Dwelling houses in Eretz-Israel in the Roman-Byzantine period* (Jerusalem 1987) 26-51 (Hebrew) (English edition in press).
- <sup>14</sup> Hence the building belonged to the Joint Expedition's "Middle" and "Late Byzantine" phases. The dating evidence will be published in later reports of the Joint Expedition. The author thanks R. J. Bull for permission to examine field notes.
- <sup>15</sup> K. G. Holum, "Archaeological evidence for the fall of Byzantine Caesarea," *BASOR* 286 (1992) 79-80, with fig. 4. This hypothesis, which best accounts for the laying of slabs over a perfectly serviceable floor, assumes that inscription no. 1 in room 1 had similarly been effaced.
- <sup>16</sup> *Armaria* in ancient art normally rest on legs or pedestals of wood, but presumably masonry ones could serve just as well: see C. Wendel, "Der antike Bücherschrank," *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Phil.-hist. Klasse*, 1943, 267-99, and "Bibliothek," *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 2 (1952) 265-70. For benches of similar type obviously used for seating, see R. G. Goodchild, "A Byzantine palace at Apollonia (Cyrenaica)," *Antiquity* 34 (1960) 249-50, and "The palace of the dux," *Apollonia, the port of Cyrene: excavations by the University of Michigan* 1965-67



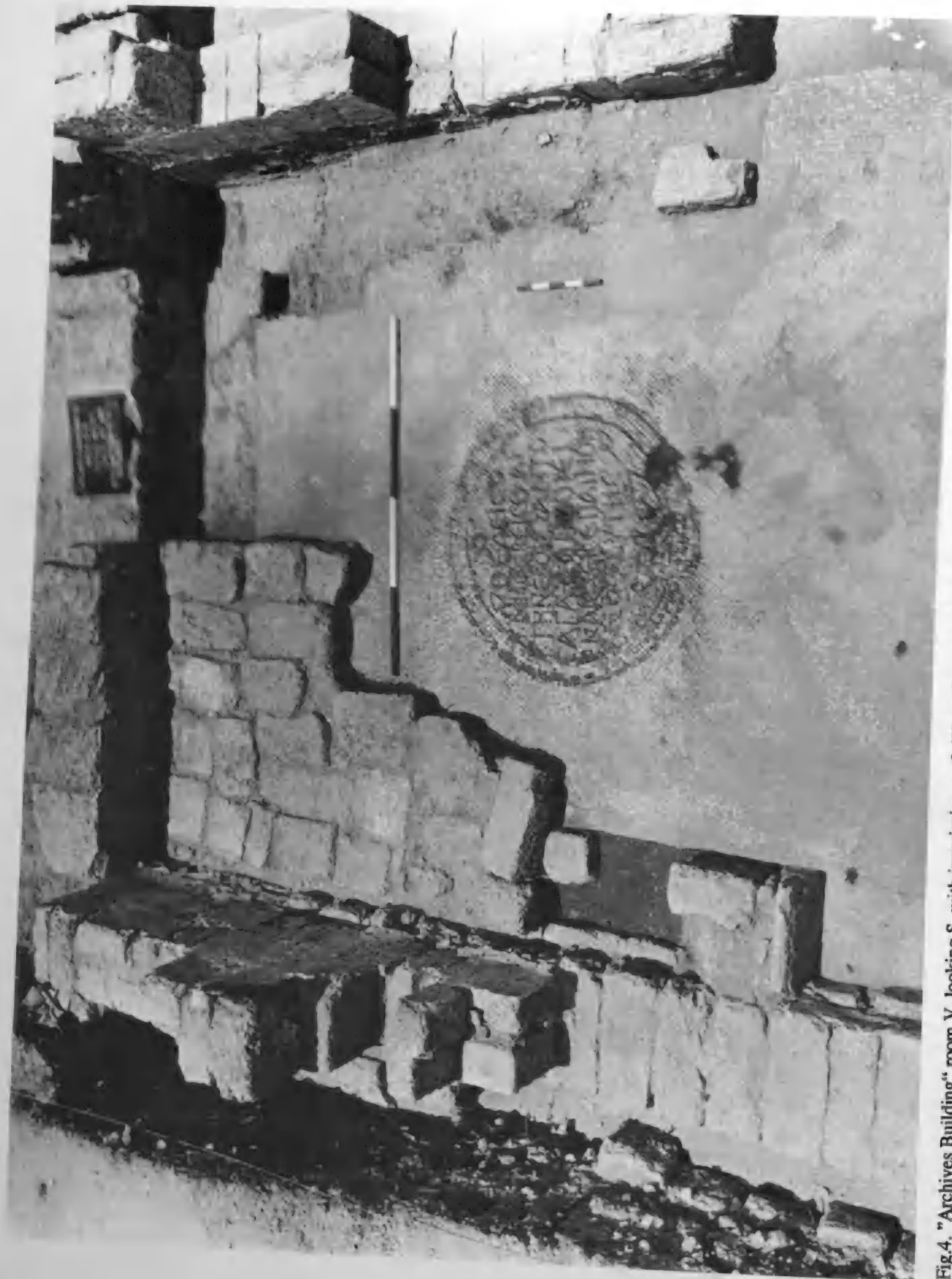


Fig. 4. "Archives Building" room V, looking S, with inscription no. 3 (Photo Drew Institute for Archaeological Research)

apparently date from the same period as the topmost pavement.

#### The inscriptions

A total of 6 inscriptions survive in the mosaic pavements of the "Archive Building" (fig. 2, nos. 1-6). Of these, Negev already published no. 1 (above), while fragmentary inscriptions 4 and 5 contribute nothing to an explanation of the character of the building. The following discussion will treat only inscriptions 2, 3 and 6, not in numerical sequence (the order of discovery) but in a sequence appropriate to their content.

#### No. 3. Medallion inscription quoting Romans 13:3 (figs. 3-4)

This inscription is in room V (fig. 2) and is oriented to be read by a person entering from the central hall. A medallion 1.5 m in diameter frames the text and consists of 4 concentric circles of tesserae: black in the outer circle, then 2 circles of light yellow tesserae, and an inner circle of black again. Within this medallion are 5 lines of text, with letters 15 cm high of black tesserae set against a white background. The letter-forms are an oval alphabet typical of Byzantine inscriptions at Caesarea. At the top of the medallion a Greek cross appears in a circle of black tesserae, and at the bottom a small lozenge and 2 large leaves with joined stems. There are smaller leaves at the beginning and ends of lines 1 and 6. The mosaicist employed these common decorations to give symmetry to his composition, which leaves the impression of careful design and good craftsmanship.

Previously unpublished.<sup>17</sup>

5 θέλεις  
μη φοβείσθαι  
τὴν ἐξουσίαν; τὸ  
ἀγαθὸν ποιεῖ  
καὶ ἔξεις ἔπαινον  
ἐξ αὐτῆς  
"If you would not fear the authority,  
then do good and you will receive  
praise from it."

Apart from the omission of the connective δέ, this inscription represents the standard text of Romans 13:3. It displays none of the phonological changes or abbreviations that occur regularly in 6th-c. inscriptions. The significance of both textual and design features is apparent from comparison with the analogous inscription that Negev found. The latter text (no. 1 in fig. 2) likewise presents Romans 13:3, although in briefer form (cf. above). Like no. 3, it is set in a medallion and positioned to be read conveniently by a person entering the room from outside, and the room in which it appears was likewise provided with benches. The letter



Fig. 3. Inscription no. 3 (Drawing K. Wanous, Drew Institute for Archaeological Research)

(Libya Antiqua supplement 4, Tripoli 1976) 248. The room with the benches in the "palace" at Apollonia served as a "vestibule", according to Goodchild, and opened into a rectangular chamber closed by an apse at its W end that he identifies as an "audience hall". Shelves were installed in the S wall of this audience hall, perhaps (he speculates) for storing law books.

<sup>17</sup> Photographs have appeared, for example, in *King Herod's dream* (supra n. 3) 170 and Holum (supra n. 15) 79.



forms of no.1 are like those of no.3, so the two probably date from the same period. Nonetheless, nos. 1 and 3 differ enough from one another to indicate different mosaicists working perhaps at different times. The border of no.2 consists of a single circle of black tesserae, and it has neither the decoration nor the concern for symmetry apparent in no.3. Moreover, in the text of no.1 φοβεῖσθαι has ι instead of ει and ἐξουσίαν employs a common ligature for ου, as expected in a 6th-c. inscription.<sup>18</sup>

Biblical and New Testament quotations occur in inscriptions from both ecclesiastical buildings and private houses,<sup>19</sup> but nos. 1 and 3 are apparently the only epigraphical examples of Romans 13:3. Patristic commentators on Romans 13:3 naturally take it as encouraging obedience to the ἐξουσία of the emperor and his officials,<sup>20</sup> and indeed in the 6th c. Choricus of Gaza refers specifically to the power of the governor of Palestine as ἐξουσία.<sup>21</sup>

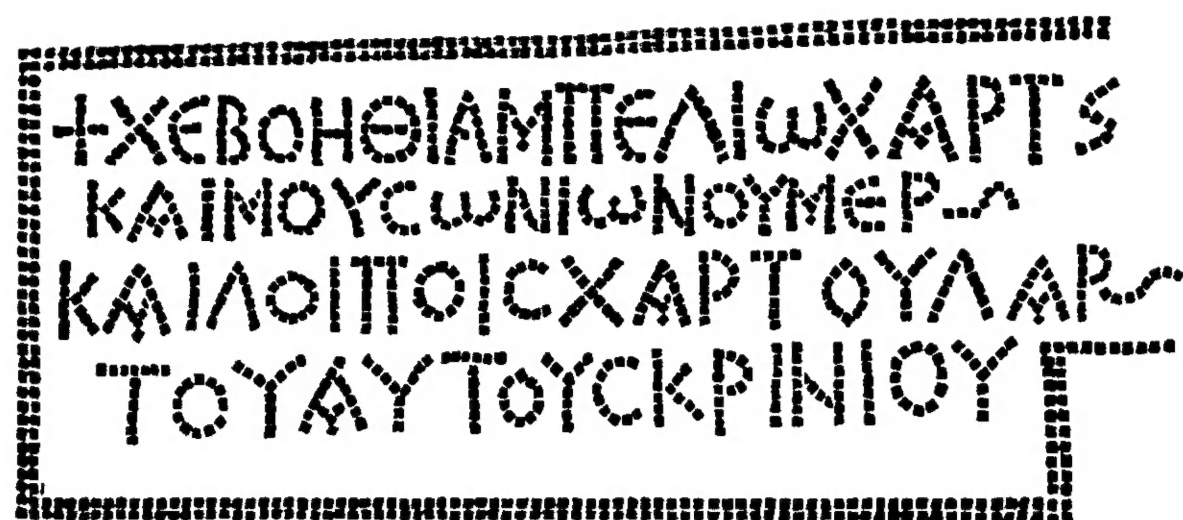


Fig.5. Inscription no.6 (Drawing K. Wanous, Drew Institute for Archaeological Research)

No.6. Invocation mentioning a skrinion (fig.5)

This inscription, in room VIII, is oriented to be read by a person leaving the room or entering from the west (above). It is contained in a rectangular frame (0.69 x 1.61 m), of a double row of black tesserae. The mosaicist began with the frame but planned inadequately for the text and was forced to break the frame at the upper right. Letters of a single row of black tesserae (10-13 cm high) are set against a white background. The letters are again a Byzantine oval alphabet, but A and Y do not correspond with no.3, and these and the single almond omicron in line 3 are links with inscription no.2 (see below). The divine name is abbreviated without sign in line 1, while S-shaped or curved line abbreviation marks appear in lines 1-3.

<sup>18</sup> F. T. Gignac, *A grammar of the Greek papyri of the Roman and Byzantine periods* (Testi e documenti per lo studio dell'antichità 4.1: Phonology [Milano 1976]) 189-90; M. Avi-Yonah, *Abbreviations in Greek inscriptions* (The Near East, 200 B.C.-A.D.100), QDAP Suppl. to vol. 9 (1940) 39, 90-91.

<sup>19</sup> E.g. from Caesarea: A. Siegelmann, "A mosaic floor at Caesarea Maritima," *IEJ* 24 (1974) 218-19.

<sup>20</sup> E.g. Joh. Chrys., *In epist. ad Rom. homil.* 23.1-4 (PG 60, 615-17); Thdt., *Interpret. epist. ad Rom.* 13.1-6 (PG 82, 193, 195); K. Staab, *Pauluskommmentare aus der griechischen Kirche aus Kettenhandschriften gesammelt und herausgegeben* (Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen 15, Münster 1933) 56, 78, 107-8, 162, 224, 407-8, 533-34.

<sup>21</sup> Or.7.8; cf. PLRE 3. 1436, "Anonymus 49".

Published (text only) by Wiemken and Holum (above n.11) 50, n.5; see also SEG 32, 1498.

(cross) Χ(ριστ)ὲ βοήθῃ Ἀμπελίῳ χαρτουλαρίῳ  
καὶ Μουσωνίῳ νουμερ(αρίῳ)  
καὶ λοιποῖς χαρτουλαρ(ιοῖς)  
τοῦ αὐτοῦ σκρινίου

4 "Christ help Ampelios the *chartularios* and Musonios the *numerarios* and the rest of the *chartularioi* of the same *skrinion*."

Χ(ριστ)ὲ βοήθῃ is a variant of a formula widely used in acclamations and invocations,<sup>22</sup> and the names are also unremarkable.<sup>23</sup> *Chartularioi* were clerks or secretaries who wrote and cared for documents (*chartai*). They could be civil or ecclesiastical, public or private,<sup>24</sup> but numbered especially among the personnel of the *officium* or τάξις of a provincial governor or *dux*. CJ 10.23.3 *praef.*, dated 468, mentions *chartularii* "qui de cohortalibus officiis uniuscuiusque provinciae largitionales titulos retractare constituuntur", while *P.Cair.Masp.* 305.4-5, dated 568, attests a certain John who was χαρτουλάρ(ιος) τῶν αἰσίων τῆς δουκικῆς τάξεως πραιτωρίων. Unlike *chartularioi*, the *numerarioi* appear to have belonged exclusively to the imperial administration, serving as accountants in the offices of the provincial governors and *duces* and at higher levels in the civil administration and military.<sup>25</sup> The well-known decree of Anastasius *de rebus Libycis* (SEG 9, 356.5, 14) mentions *numerarioi* of the *dux* of the Pentapolis, and *P. Cair. Masp.* 57.II.15, dated 554-559, another from the ducal τάξις of the Thebaid. The *NDO* (ed. Seeck), from about 425, lists *numerarioi et adiutores eorum* in the office of the *dux Palaestinae* (24.51) but just one in that of the *consularis Palaestinae* (43.10). Likewise specific to the imperial government was a *skrinion*.<sup>26</sup> In the 6th c. this was a bureau within the office of a governor, *dux*, or higher authority, like the κανονικὸν σκρίνιον of *P. Cair. Masp.* 131. 12-13, which was a bureau of the governor of the Thebaid that included a *numerarios* and was probably responsible for revenues. Cyril of Scythopolis mentions a similar *skrinion* of the civil governor of Palestine. In 512 the praetorian prefect ordered it to remit a surtax imposed upon the Anastasis church, the other holy places, and the landowners of Jerusalem and to make up the difference from other revenues: ἐκέλευσεν κουφισθῆναι τὴν εἰρημένην περισσοπρακτίαν ἐκ τοῦ κατὰ Παλαιστίνην σκρινίου, *V. Sab.* 54 (ed. Schwartz) pp. 145-46.

No. 2: invocation mentioning a mag(ister) or mag(istriano) (fig.6)

The third inscription to be discussed here is in room IV of the archive building, the central hall, and is positioned to be read by a person leaving room VIII across the *skrinion* inscription. An oval (70 cm in diameter), formed of a double row of red tesserae, contains 5 lines of text. Letters 10 cm high, made of a single row of black tesserae, are set against a white background. Except for M, the alphabet corresponds with no.6, but here all thetas and omicrons are almond-shaped and the S-shaped abbreviation marks are smaller. Again, the divine name is abbreviated without mark. This and no.6 were probably composed by the same mosaicist. Unpublished.

<sup>22</sup> Th. Klauser, "Akklamation," *RfAC* 1 (Stuttgart 1950) 228; esp. E. Peterson, *Eis theós: Epigraphische, formgeschichtliche und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Cöttingen 1926) 1-77 *passim*, esp. 2-4.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. e.g. PLRE s.vv. for Ampelios and Musonios among imperial functionaries in this period, and on Ampelios see M. Schwabe and B. Lifshitz, *Beth She'arim 2: the inscriptions* (New Brunswick, NJ 1974) no.107.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. V. Martin, "Letter of recommendation for three monks," *JEJ* 43 (1954) 74-75.

<sup>25</sup> A. H. M. Jones, *The later Roman empire 284-602* (Oxford 1964) 451, 539, 592-99.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *Ibid.* 412, 427-28, 449-50, for the *scriinia* of the central administration. Division of provincial offices into *scriinia* is less well attested but did exist, as the present inscription emphasizes.





Fig.6. Inscription no.2 (Drawing K. Wanous, Drew Institute for Archaeological Research)

Χ(ριστ)ὲ Βοή-  
 θι Μαρίνω  
 μαγ(ίστερι) vel μαγ(ιστριανῶ) καὶ ) Ἀμπε-  
 λίω καὶ) Μου-  
 σωνίω

5

"Christ help Marinus the *magistriano*s (or *magister*) and Ampelios and Musonios.

For the invocation Χ(ριστ)ὲ Βοήθι and two of the names see no.6. Marinus, a name of Semitic origin, is common in the region, appearing in 2 other inscriptions from Caesarea.<sup>27</sup> His office might be expanded in two ways. *Magistrianoi*,<sup>28</sup> "master's men", were *agentes in rebus* enrolled in a *schola* subject to the master of offices in Constantinople.<sup>29</sup> In the 6th c. they still served as envoys abroad (PLRE 3, 731-32, "Iulianus 8"), on missions of inquiry in the provinces (PLRE 3, 1447, "Anonymus 115", ὁ ἀποσταλὲς μαγιστριανός), or, like the Sergios μαγιστριανός καὶ) τοποτηρητής ("deputy") who is attested in 533 in two inscriptions from Gerasa,<sup>30</sup> in other capacities connected with provincial government. A century earlier, *agentes in rebus* had been dispatched from Constantinople to head provincial offices, though in the eastern prefecture the ducal *officia* only. The office of *dux Palaestinae*, for example, had a "principem de scola agentum in rebus" (NDO 24.50). Alternatively, Marinus might have been a *magister*, and one might expand the abbreviation either μαγ(ίστερι) or μαγ(ίστρω) (for the latter compare, e.g., P.Mert. 46). P. Lond. 5.1678, dated 566-573, is a petition addressed to two περιβλέπτοις κόμ(εσι) καὶ) μαγίστεσι whom Rouillard and Bell identified as belonging to the ducal *officium* of the

<sup>27</sup> B. Lifshitz, "Inscriptions de Césarée de Palestine," RBibl 72 (1965) 98-99, nos. 1, 3; H. Wuthnow, *Die semitischen Menschennamen in griechischen Inschriften und Papyri des vorderen Orients* (Studien zur Epigraphik und Papyrskunde 1.4, Leipzig 1930) 72-74.

<sup>28</sup> Leah Di Segni suggested to me the expansion *mag(istriano)s*.

<sup>29</sup> Jones (supra n.25) 578-82.

<sup>30</sup> C. B. Welles, "The inscriptions," in C. H. Kraeling (ed.), *Gerasa* (New Haven 1938) nos. 277-78.

Thebaid.<sup>31</sup> In either case, whether as *magister* or as *agens in rebus*, Marinus belonged to one of the provincial *officia* of Palestine, either of the *dux* or of the civil governor. In no.2 he is associated with the same two officials who in no.6 are *chartularios* and *numerarios* of a *skrinion*.

Comparison of nos. 2 and 6 suggests other conclusions that are a little less certain. In these inscriptions the names and titles are probably arranged in order of rank. In no.6 Ampelios *chartularios* heads the inscription, followed by Musonios the *numerarios* and the other (unnamed) *chartularioi*, all of the same *skrinion*. The *chartularios* Ampelios was thus perhaps head of the *skrinion* of no.6, a bureau of a provincial *officium* or τάξις. In no.2, however, the *magister* or *agens in rebus* appears at the head, followed by 2 leading members of the *skrinion* of no.6. In no. 2, it appears, the mosaicist brought into the invocation not just members of one *skrinion* but also their chief, the head of the provincial *officium* itself, corresponding to the *princeps* attested in this position in the early 5th c. (NDO 34.50, 43.5, cf. above). These two inscriptions demonstrate therefore that in 6th-c. Palestine one of the provincial *officia*, either of the *dux* or of the civil governor, was subdivided into several bureaux and had a *magister* or *agens in rebus* at its head.

Though the inscriptions give no specific evidence on this point, the *officium*, headed by Marinus to which the *skrinion* of no.6 belongs, was probably that of the civil governor of Palestine. Caesarea had been the seat of the provincial governor since Judaea (later Palestine) first became a Roman province in the 1st c. C.E. Inscriptions of builders at Caesarea from the 5th and 6th c. (admittedly few in number) regularly employ the civil governor eponymously, beginning with ἐπί and the governor's name and titles.<sup>32</sup> In NJ 103 (dated 536), in which he promoted the civil governor of Palestine to proconsul, Justinian evokes Caesarea's antiquity and distinction as one of the reasons for the promotion (*praef.*), and calls the law the "the special law of the Caesareans" (c.1). The close association in the public and official mind between Caesarea and the civil governor derived from the governor's regular residence in the city, which is amply attested in numerous sources. Literary texts from the 6th and 7th c. mention the civil governor's palace (πραيتώριον).<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, no literary or legal text similarly connects the *dux Palaestinae* with Caesarea,<sup>34</sup> nor does he appear in a single inscription from the site. There is no reason to suspect that the *dux* had a *praetorium* at Caesarea, or that the ducal *officium* was ever stationed there.

If the *skrinion* of no.6 belonged to the civil governor, the presence in it of a *numerarios* means that this bureau dealt with the revenue and expenditure side of the governor's responsibilities. It was therefore probably the same *skrinion* that, according to Cyril of Scythopolis, received orders in 512 to remit a surtax imposed on landowners in Jerusalem (above p.341), and the *numerarios* in office on that occasion probably faced the daunting task of balancing the books without those revenues.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> G. Rouillard, *L'administration civile de l'Égypte byzantine* (2nd ed., Paris 1928) 151 specifies that they were heads of the *scrinium a libellis* of the ducal *officium*. H. I. Bell in P. Lond. 5, p.69, wrote: "It is clear that the μαγίστηρ was an official of the τάξις, in the present case of the ducal τάξις."

<sup>32</sup> E.g. B. Lifshitz, "Inscriptions grecques de Césarée en Palestine," RBibl 68 (1981) 121-22: ἐπὶ Φλ(αυίου) Ἐντολίου ἐνδοξω(άτου) στρατηλ(άτου) καὶ ἀνθυπάτου ...

<sup>33</sup> Joh. Mal. fr. 48 in *Excerpta de insidiis* (ed. de Boor, Berlin 1905) 3, 173; *Acta martyris Anastasii Persae* (ed. H. Usener, Bonn 1894) 5 lines a23, b4-5.

<sup>34</sup> In 516 or 517 the *dux* Anastasius, fearing a "multitude" of Chalcedonian monks, fled from Jerusalem to Caesarea, Cyr. Scyth., *Vit. Sab.* 56 (ed. Schwartz) p.152, but this need not imply permanent residence or a *praetorium*. In the 380s the *dux* resided, at least temporarily, in Jerusalem: Ruf., *HE* 1.11; PLRE 1.144 "Bacurius".

<sup>35</sup> Marc. Diac., *Vit. Porph.* (ed. H. Grégoire and M.-A. Kugener) (Paris 1930) 28, referring to events in 398, mentions two *commentarienses* from the same governor's *officium* (κομμενταρήσιοι τῆς



If Marinos was an *agens in rebus*, he was on temporary assignment heading a provincial *officium*. Otherwise, he along with Ampelios, Musonios, and the anonymous chartularioi mentioned in nos. 2 and 6, numbered among the *cohortales* of Palaestina Prima, the body of officials belonging to a governor's *taxis* or *officium* (e.g. CJ 10.23.3 *praef.*, quoted above). According to A. H. M. Jones, who studied them most carefully,<sup>36</sup> such bodies formed closed corporations — analogous to but lower in rank than the *curiales*, the municipal senators — that lay an obligation on the sons of members to succeed their fathers in the same capacity. When they retired, these men faced the burdensome liturgy-like *primipili pastus*, apparently the duty imposed on senior *cohortales* of delivering rations in cash or kind from a province to the military units.<sup>37</sup> This dismal prospect, and the hope of a more lucrative career elsewhere, induced *cohortales* to attempt escape into the clergy or into higher immune positions, and consequently the imperial government in Constantinople legislated frequently to keep them in place (e.g. CTh 8.4.23, dated 412, NJ 123.15, dated 546). Nevertheless, humbler *curiales* as well as sons of veterans and even tradesmen entered the body of *cohortales*. In 436 a scandalized Theodosius II excluded the latter because bankers, jewelers, clothiers, and the like demeaned the imperial service (CJ 12.57.12).

Some evidence exists for numbers, pay, and ranks. In 398 the proconsul of Africa disposed of 400 *cohortales* (CTh 1.12.6), and by comparison the proconsul at Caesarea must have required at a minimum 200-300, since Palaestina Prima was an equally urbanized province and its proconsul had the extra judicial business of hearing appeals from Palaestina Secunda and Tertia.<sup>38</sup> In 536 Justinian allocated the proconsul 22 pounds of gold (1584 solidi) in annual salaries which he was to divide among himself, his *assessor*, and the members of his *officium* (NJ 103.1). If the proconsul kept 10-12 pounds for himself, and gave the *assessor* a tenth of this, only 2-3 solidi per annum would remain on average for each of the *cohortales*, although leading officials like those mentioned by name in the inscriptions must have received several times as much.<sup>39</sup> A salary this meagre (not much more than a living wage) indicates that even Marinos, Ampelios, and Musonios were relatively minor personages. Yet these men were by no means impoverished. These and lesser *cohortales* profited most handsomely from their *sportulae* (also known as *curiales* or *consuetudines*, "customaries"), the fees they collected for performing their official functions — such as, on the judicial side, for introducing lawsuits, or providing written copies of court proceedings and judgments, or, on the financial side, for collecting taxes! Naturally they also expected fees for the papers on which they wrote.<sup>40</sup> Despite mundane origins, relative wealth and proximity to the governor must have made Marinos, Ampelios, and Musonios big men in the city. Too low in the social hierarchy to merit official ranks, such men nonetheless acquired grandiose titles during the great period of titulary inflation of the 5th-6th c. Hence John, *numerarius* of the Thebaïd *dux*, is styled *καταπρό(τοπος)*, or *clarissimus*, like a senator, and two *magistri* from the same *officium* are proclaimed *καταβλεπτοι κύμ(ιτες)*, or *spectabiles*,

<sup>36</sup> *ἀνακτοριῆς* (sc. τοῦ βασιλέως). Such officials, who headed a *scrinium* on the judicial side of a governor's *officium*, took custody of prisoners and employed torturers (Jones [supra n.25] 587, 593), and indeed this case involved the arrest and intimidation of three leading men of Gaza.

<sup>37</sup> Jones (supra n.25) 592-96, also "The Roman civil service (clerical and sub-clerical grades)," JRS 39 (1949) 38-55.

<sup>38</sup> Jones (supra n.25) 67, 459, 594.

<sup>39</sup> NJ 103.1. *ἐκ ἑκατέρων Παλαιστίνης*, referring to the other two provinces, since the proconsul would not, of course, have heard appeals from his own jurisdiction in Palaestina Prima.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Jones (supra n.25) 397-98, 500-1, 593. According to NJ 13.4 the 600 *cohortales* of Egypt shared only 1000 solidi.

<sup>41</sup> Jones (supra n.25) 496-99; also J. Durliat and A. Guillou, "Le tarif d'Abydos (vers 492)," BCH 108 (1984) 586-87, 592-93. In 1993 new excavations in the vicinity of the "Archive Building" turned up three large fragments of an apparent *γνώσις συνθημάτων* (*notitia consuetudinum*) listing the fees permitted for specific procedures; it will be published in a future article.

like proconsuls and others in the second tier of the high imperial aristocracy (references above pp. 341-42).

Identification of the *skrinion* and its *cohortales* brings discussion back to the text of Rom. 13:3 and to the building in which all the inscriptions appeared. Taken as a group, these texts make it virtually certain that Structure I of the Joint Expedition housed the *skrinion* of inscription 6 and the *cohortales* who belonged to it. Two of the inscriptions evoke divine aid for bureau personnel, while the quotations from St Paul were reminders of the advantage in accounting properly for the emperor's money. The "benches" surrounding nos. 1 and 3, if not bases for *armaria*, suggest that rooms I and V may have been waiting-rooms for provincials involved in audits or appeals, and such persons might likewise have wished to heed the words of St Paul. In short, to call this an "archive" building does injustice to the labors and anxieties of those who did business here. The *chartularioi* no doubt wrote and filed *chartai*, but Structure I is better designated the imperial revenue office of Byzantine Caesarea.

It is possible that Structure I was part of a larger group of buildings, perhaps even of the civil governor's *praetorium* attested in literary texts.<sup>41</sup> Negev's "long hall", now concealed beneath a road, may have been an audience hall, the westward oriented apse a *stibadium* with couches arranged in a semicircle for dining. The circular chamber to the west of the apse contained a 6th-c. inscription praising a governor. Some 25 m to the south the Joint Expedition discovered a relatively small room (4.8 x 5.2 m) paved with an elegant 5th- or 6th-c. mosaic of the Seasons. As recently proposed, this may have been a reception or dining room appropriate for a high official or governor.<sup>42</sup> One is tempted to think of 6th-c. parallels, like the so-called "Palace of the Dux" at Apollonia in Cyrenaica,<sup>43</sup> or the edifice called "au triclinos" at Apamea, proposed as the palace of the governor of Syria II.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, too little of the data from Caesarea has been analyzed and published. The evidence from Field C remains disjointed, and no continuous plan of the 5th- and 6th-c. occupation can as yet be drawn. Nevertheless, the hypothesis of the palace may hold the key to interpreting a fascinating part of 6th-c. Caesarea's urban terrain.

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#### Acknowledgements

For permission to publish these inscriptions in their archaeological context, and for providing drawings and photographs, I am grateful to Robert J. Bull, Director of the Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima. Dr. Bull excavated the "archive building" under license from the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums (now the Israel Antiquities Authority, Amir Drori director). R. J. Bull, C. Lehmann, L. Di Segni, and M. Rozenblit read the article in draft and delivered the author from various errors and infelicities. Those that remain are my own.

<sup>41</sup> As suggested by K. Holum in Wiemken and Holum (supra n.11) 27.

<sup>42</sup> M. Spiro, "Some Byzantine mosaics from Caesarea," in R. L. Vann (ed.), *Caesarea papers* (JRA Suppl. 5, 1992) 250-57.

<sup>43</sup> See Goodchild, "A Byzantine palace," 256-57, and "Palace of the dux," 245-66 (both cited supra n.16).

<sup>44</sup> J. C. Balty, "L'édifice dit 'au triclinos'," *Apamée de Syrie* (Miscellanea fasc. 6, Bruxelles 1969) 105-16, esp. 113.



# Errata and Addenda

## Addendum to page 63, article by B. Zissu



Herodian dove-cote excavated by E. Netzer above Jericho.

## Addendum to page 193, article by R. Hachlili

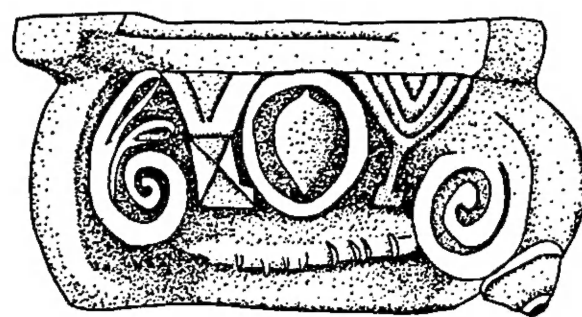


Fig.7.2 Side B

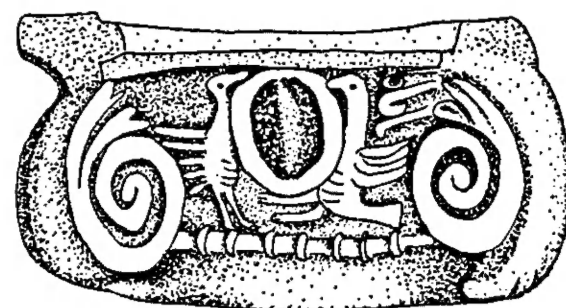


Fig.7.3 Side D.

## CORRIGENDA

page	line	correct to
Table of contents	#2	"entertainment"
Table of contents	#11	"in northern Palestine"
15	* (note)	conclusions suggested below
17	Fig.1b	General plan of southwestern part of Caesarea
47	n.20	add See p.55 for a summary.
71	Title	Khirbet el-Hamam
71	n.4 line 4	S. Hashman
73 etc.	running heads	Khirbet el-Hamam
77	§3, end first line	The SE side was presumably left open
80	Fig.13	Camp B (not B, 1)
81	Fig. 14	North arrow should be turned 30° to the left.
81	Fig.14 caption	Elevations are in meters a.s.l.
84	6 lines from bottom	the W wall of the ramp turns SW
85	Fig.20 caption	Elevations are in meters in relation to a local zero point; a north arrow should point to the foot of the page.
89	n.16	Kh. Qumran
96	on Fig.1 (at top)	Caesarea
132	caption	Fig.14c is above, fig.14d is below
135	Krug's line 2	delete "First a few comments ... in order."
136	§2, line 11	delete "atypically" and read "while the sistrum is placed in the goddess' right hand which is not in its normal raised pose"
138	line 3	a reclining man, (add comma)
138	§2 line 10	read "the imperial family. Furthermore, the portrait connected to the second Caracallan type."
is		"... with rounded edges (fig.2)."
160	last line of text	Fig.2 (left). Meroth, column on pedestal.
160	caption to figs.	Fig.3 (right). Capernaum, base on pedestal.
162-63	Plan of Sepphoris	This is Netzer and Weiss fig.1.
204	Cat. no.45 line 6	(Fig.45.2 is omitted)